



God Makes a Home

Goal: To show gratitude to God for the gracious gifts of creation.

RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

. . . In Genesis 2:4b-9, 15-23

Genesis 2 tells of a lush garden planted “in the east” (v. 8) that is watered from below, in striking contrast to the sparse rainfall of the region. The tree of life (v. 9) confers eternal life while the tree of the knowledge of good and evil confers wisdom. God put in the garden every tree that was both beautiful and could provide food for human beings.

God does not create people to be static; verse 15 says that the human being was put in the garden “to till it and keep it.” The Hebrew word usually translated “man” or “the man” is *adam*, a generic term meaning “human being.” This is also a play on words—*adamah* means “ground” or “soil,” the substance from which human beings are created. The differentiation of the sexes does not occur until verse 23. There the Hebrew words *ish* (man) and *ishah* (woman) are used to show how the two are connected by their very names, as well as by the bones from which they are formed. The story underlines the mutual dependency of men and women.

. . . In Your Children's Experiences

God provides a home for human beings that includes everything pleasant both for food and in appearance. The children in your group may ask: “How did God do it?” Some children may be able to compare this to the kind of provisions their parents and caregivers make for them. Others, sadly, will not. Not every child will relate immediately to the image of a garden as a positive place of joy and peace. Be prepared to help them think about the kind of environment that is safe and welcoming for them. Older children, especially, can understand the value of unspoiled natural beauty. They may be eager to make a difference by caring for the environment and helping bring it back to the kind of world God intended.

. . . In Your Relationships with the Children

One of the aspects of the creation story is the birth of human beings—male and female. Be sure to affirm to children that we all are created in the image of God. Neither gender is more important in God's eyes. We also are encouraged to be caretakers of the world. These are important messages in a world where nature is often exploited and women are sometimes treated in unfair ways.

Do not underestimate your importance as a role model for the children you teach. How they respond to the issues raised in this lesson may be influenced by the way they perceive you are responding. Do you appreciate the world God has created? Your excitement and enthusiasm for the graciousness of creation may arouse in your children an interest that could become a lifelong adventure for them.

*O God, I pray that the children and I will experience
the love and care that you intend for us. Amen.*



Supplies

Music & Melodies

bit.ly/GGGMusicMelodies

Stories, Colors & More (SCM) i-iv, 1, 14, 15

basic supplies
(see p. vii)

internet-connected
device

blanket or mats

candle

snack

Guided Play

choice 1: small toy
animals, four boxes or
baskets, old magazines

choice 2: old magazines

choice 3: a variety of
fruits and vegetables
with peels of different
shapes and sizes, such
as apples, bananas,
oranges, carrots,
potatoes, and so forth

Exploring

choice 1: **SCM 1a, 1b, 1c, 1d**, paper fastener

choice 2: O-shaped
cereal

choice 3: water play
table (or large tub
of water), plastic
tablecloth or drop cloth,
water toys

choice 4: copies of
Grace Notes (GN) 1

Some SCMs are used repeatedly throughout the quarter. It is a good idea to keep them in an envelope or folder for further use.

GATHERING IN GOD'S GRACE

Before the Children Arrive

Designate a story corner and lay out a blanket or individual mats for the children so their backs will be to the door.

Post **SCM i-ii**, "Your Visual Schedule." Cut out and glue the arrow marker onto a clothespin. Use the 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.

Select the activities that will work best for you and your children. You do not need to do everything suggested!

"Exploring God's Grace" choices 1 and 2 require more prep.

Welcoming and Guided Play



Greet children as they arrive and say, "Grace and peace be with you." Prompt them to respond, "And also with you." Be sensitive to any children who might be coming for the first time.

Introduce yourself to parents/caregivers. Be sure that they know who will be caring for their children. Explain to them that the children will hear a story about the creation of the world.

Invite the children to choose a guided play activity to start:

1. **Matching**—Place four boxes or baskets around the room.

Attach a magazine picture to each box that depicts sky, water, mountains, or grass. Each box will represent a different habitat. Have a few toy animals around the room. Invite the children to find the basket or box that shows the place where the toy animal might like to be and to put it there. Have conversations with the children about their choices. Option: Use animal pictures glued on index cards instead of toy animals.

2. **Mural making**—Provide a large sheet of paper or several sheets taped together. Have magazine pictures of flowers, trees, vegetables, fruits, other plants, leaves, and grass. Invite the children to glue the pictures on the paper to make it look like a garden. Save the mural for "Hearing the Story."

3. **Wondering**—Have paper bags, each with one fruit or vegetable inside. Invite the children, without peeking, to handle the vegetables and guess what they are. Have conversations about how God made some plants for us to eat and the importance of them for our enjoyment and nutrition.

T Give the children a signal when it's time for something new; sing a familiar song or repeat a phrase such as: "One, two, something new." Expect this to be difficult for some, especially if they are new to your group. It may be helpful to give some children a specific task.



Transitioning to Story Time

When you sense the children are ready to move into group time, call them to the story corner, singing “Thank You, Holy God”—SCM 15. Repeat words and phrases as seems appropriate.

We Are God’s Family

Say the action poem:

You and you and you and you (*point to those in circle*)
 Are part of God’s big family. (*hug yourself*)
 I stretch my arms to hold you all, (*stretch arms around each child on each side*)
 A great big circle we will be.
 God’s arms reach around the world (*stretch arms out wide*)
 And hold each child in loving care. (*hug yourself*)
 For God loves you and you and you (*point to those in circle*)
 And all the children everywhere. (*stretch arms out wide*)

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.



Use “wonder” questions that do not force a child to remember facts. Wonder questions help a child think aloud. Answers are neither right nor wrong. They help teach children to speak from their hearts.

Play Guess Who

Sitting in a circle with the children, say, “Guess who has curly hair . . . likes to build with blocks . . . has two older brothers . . .” and so on. Invite the children to guess which child you are talking about. Use the game to emphasize each child’s uniqueness.

Hearing the Story

L

Hang the mural the children made in “Welcoming and Guided Play” on the wall. Admire the mural and highlight the pictures of the wonderful things God has made. Wonder what things the children see in the picture that they like.

Turn on the candle, saying, “God, your Word is our light.” Repeat the phrase, prompting the children to say “light” with you.

Open the Bible to Genesis 2 so the children know that the story comes from the Bible.

Read **SCM 1**. Express the emotions of the story in your voice, gestures, and facial expressions. Conclude the story by prompting the children to say, “Amen.”

Read the story one more time, stopping at the paragraph that starts, “God created many different kinds of animals.” Wonder what sound an insect, or bird, or animal might make, or “What animal in the garden would you want to sound like?” Ask the children to make the sounds, and then continue with the story. If the children enjoy this, you might want to end by singing a familiar song that uses animal sounds, such as “Old MacDonald Had a Farm.”



Say that people like animals, but the best company for a person is another person. God made us to be friends with one another.

Turn off the candle.

EXPLORING GOD'S GRACE



1. Enjoying the Friends God Made



*Before the session, prepare the game pieces and spinner on **SCM 1a**. Cut out the game pieces, spinner base, and arrow. Fold the game pieces in half so they stand up. Punch a hole in the arrow and use a paper fastener to attach it to the base. Glue **SCM 1c** and **1d** to construction paper. Cut the cards apart.*

Play a game to give thanks for God's creation. Use the game board on **SCM 1b** to play the game. Players take turns spinning the arrow and moving the number of spaces indicated. Allow time for all to take turns playing. Comment on how we enjoy doing things with friends that God has made. As each child reaches the finish space, invite the children to shout out, "Thank you, God!"

Some children may prefer to play a matching game about animals. Turn all the cards facedown and invite the children to take turns trying to match animal pairs. Whenever a match is made, invite the child making the match to say, "Thank you, God, for (animal)." You may choose to use fewer sets if it proves to be too much of a challenge.



2. Feeding the Birds



Remind the children that it is fall and that winter is coming. It will be difficult for birds to find food when the weather turns colder. Explain to the children that one way we can help care for God's creation is to provide bird feeders.

Pour O-shaped toasted oat cereal on paper plates for the children to share. Invite the children to select several pipe cleaners. Show the children how to thread one piece of cereal on the pipe cleaner and curl the end to secure the "O." Have them continue threading the cereal until there is about 2" of pipe cleaner remaining. Help the children make a loop at that end. Encourage the children to make several strands.

The children may choose to form circles, hearts, or spirals with the strands. One option may be to string several of the feeders together to make a garland or chain. Help the children tie string or yarn to the feeders. Suggest that they take them home to hang from a tree, deck, or balcony.

Comment that God made people to take care of all the beautiful things that God made. Ask the children what they do to help take care of other people, animals, and plants. Wonder how God feels when we help take care of God's wonderful creation.



Water play is a very soothing activity for young children. Supervise them carefully and remind the children of a few simple rules, such as no splashing.

Use “wonder” questions that do not force a child to remember facts. Wonder questions help a child think aloud. Answers are neither right nor wrong. They help teach children to speak from their hearts.



Ask parents and caregivers for their email addresses so that you can provide them with the link to www.pcusastore.com/GGGdownloads, where they can download coloring pages, *Grace Sightings*, audio stories, and songs (see p. vii).

3. Playing with Water TD

Start a discussion about water and how we use it. Explain that God made water so everything could live. Wonder with the children how water helps us live.

- ▼ Place a plastic tablecloth or drop cloth on a low table or on the floor under the water play area.
- ▼ If you use a tub of water, set it on a low table.
- ▼ Put water toys near the water table or tub and invite the children to play with the items and the water.

4. Coloring Page FM

Hand out **GN 1** and crayons. Invite the children to color the picture. Engage the children in conversation using the following questions:

- ▼ I wonder, “Why did God use Adam’s rib to create Eve?”
- ▼ I wonder, “Why did God create someone to be a helper with Adam?”
- ▼ I wonder, “How can we help God to care for the world?”

T *Transitions can be difficult. This may be a good time for some quick physical activities, such as squeezing your hands or stretching.*

LOVING AND SERVING GOD FA LD

Call the children to snack time, singing “All Creation God Made”—**SCM 14**. Repeat words and phrases as seems appropriate.

Have each child put away one toy or object. Invite everyone to sit around a table or on the floor. Offer a prayer:

Dear God, we thank you for making us and giving us this beautiful world in which to live. Help us to love all people and to care for your creation. Amen.

Enjoy a snack. Take a moment to tell each child something positive about your time, such as: “Thank you for the good job you did by putting things away” or “I’m glad that you and (*Name*) had fun today.”

Invite the children to talk about ways they can care for God’s creation in their homes and in their schools. As the children leave, bless them: “(*Name*), the grace of God is with you.”

God Makes a Home



God creates Adam and Eve to care for God's creation.

