



God Calls Jeremiah

Goal: To practice telling about God's love.

RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

. . . In Jeremiah 1:4-10

Jeremiah endured suffering as God's prophet. What sustained him? His call from God. He recognized he was being set apart to serve God. In his account here, we see several stages.

First, Jeremiah recognized God's commissioning. God said, "Before I created you in the womb I knew you; before you were born I set you apart; I made you a prophet to the nations" (1:5, CEB). God chose Jeremiah, even before his birth, to carry out God's work. This is the deepest sense of purpose imaginable. But then Jeremiah objected. He said he didn't know how to speak because he was only a child (v. 6, CEB).

Yet God reassured Jeremiah. God said not to be afraid and that wherever he went, "I'm with you to rescue you" (v. 8, CEB). This was a divine reassurance that no matter how bad things got, Jeremiah could depend on the presence and protection of God.

Finally, to make this real, God gave Jeremiah a sign. God "stretched out his hand, touched my mouth, and said to me, 'I'm putting my words in your mouth'" (v. 9, CEB).

God's grace called and protected Jeremiah. He spent his life in gratitude for God's grace and in obedience to God's call.

. . . In Your Children's Experiences

Children probably have many experiences of hearing a parent or other adult call them with a job for them to do. "Hey, I need your help." Children of all ages will be able to tell a story about ways they help out and chores they do. You might ask, "Is there a job you don't think you could do?" or "Are there jobs at home, at school, or in your neighborhood that you don't like to do?" These questions will help make the transition to telling the story of Jeremiah and understanding his response to God's call to him to be a prophet.

. . . In Your Relationships with the Children

As the children arrive, involve them in helping you with something for the session. Let them assist you with getting out supplies for the learning activities or putting out the Bible or candle. As you involve them in getting the room ready, you could talk with them about the ways they help out at home. What are jobs they have to do at home or at school or in their neighborhood?

As you tell the story of Jeremiah and his reluctance to believe he could do what God was asking, remind the children that whenever they have tough jobs to do, God is with them.

Dear God, open my ears to your call and give my feet strength to respond. Amen.



Supplies

Music & Melodies

bit.ly/GGGMusicMelodies

Stories, Colors & More (SCM) i-iv, 11, 18, 20

basic supplies
(see p. vii)

internet-connected
device

blanket or mats

copies of **Grace Notes**
(GN) 2, basket

candle

Guided Play

choice 2: copies of **GN 1**

choice 3: stamps and
ink

Exploring

choice 3: copies of
GN 3 and **GN 4**

choice 4: copies of **GN 5**

Writing each child's name is important. Children like to see their name written. It gives them a sense of identity and inclusion in the activity.

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.

Use **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 with special needs or disabilities.

Before the session, for "Welcoming and Guided Play" choice 2, cut the megaphone shapes from copies of **GN 1** for each child.

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

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."

Introduce yourself to the parents/caregivers. Explain to them that the children will hear a story about Jeremiah, a young boy who was called to be a prophet, a messenger for God.

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

1. **Making Puppets**—Provide lunch-size paper bags and craft supplies such as crayons, construction paper, yarn, glue sticks, and fabric scraps. Help the children create paper bag puppets. Encourage them to make faces on the bottom of the bags. They can add hair with yarn or paper glued in place. Having the mouth half on the bottom and half on the bag allows the puppet to "talk" when the hand is flapping the bottom. Encourage them to be creative with the puppets.
2. **Megaphone Message**—Provide megaphone shapes using copies of **GN 1**. Explain what a megaphone is and what it is used for. Invite the children to color their megaphones. While they work, read the words printed on the megaphone. Help the children tape their megaphone together. Allow time for the children to practice sharing messages by shouting, whispering, singing, and saying the words through their megaphones.
3. **Making a Name Tag**—Write each child's name in large letters on a sheet of paper. Invite them to decorate their name with markers, stickers, stamps, and so forth. Punch holes in the top two corners of the paper, thread yarn through the holes, and hang each child's name tag around their neck. Invite the children to wear them to "Transitioning to Story Time."

T For children struggling with transitions, set clear expectations and let them know how long activities should take.



Transitioning to Story Time

When you sense the children are ready to move into group time, call them to the story corner, singing “God Is with Me”—**SCM 18**. Repeat words and phrases as it seems appropriate.

Following Directions



Cut apart strips on **GN 2**, fold, and place in a basket. Tell the children that they are going to take turns following directions. Invite the children to take turns picking a strip from the basket. Read their strip and have them follow the directions. Put the strips back in the basket and play again.

Calling



Instruct the children to walk around the room. Tell them that you will call them one by one to join you in the story corner. Call each child by name. Tell them to raise their name tags when they hear their name.

When all the children are gathered, line them up by height. Then have them mix up and line them up by age (as best you can). Invite them to sit down. Tell them that they are going to hear a story about Jeremiah, who was a young boy.

Call and Response

Go around the circle, saying to each child, “[Name], you are God’s messenger. You can tell others about God!” Tell them that they are going to hear a story about one of God’s messengers and his message to God’s people.

Hearing the Story

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 Jeremiah 1 so the children know the story comes from the Bible.

Tell the children that they are going to hear a story about the prophet Jeremiah. Explain that a prophet is a person called by God to be God’s messenger. Tell them that Jeremiah is a young boy when God calls him! Invite the children to listen to what Jeremiah sees, and hears, and does! Read **SCM 11**. Express the emotions of the story in your voice, gestures, and facial expressions. Conclude the story by prompting the children to say, “Amen.”

As you read the story again, children who made puppets earlier may use them to play the part of Jeremiah when he talks with God, and act out what Jeremiah says when he acts as God’s messenger.

Turn off the candle.



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.



EXPLORING GOD'S GRACE

1. Growing Up

B MS C L

Engage the children in conversation using the following questions. Invite the children to act out appropriate actions to their responses.

- ▾ What does a baby do?
- ▾ What does a toddler do?
- ▾ What can you do now that you couldn't do when you were a baby? A toddler?
- ▾ What things do grownups do?
- ▾ What do you think you will be able to do soon?
- ▾ What have you told other people about God?
- ▾ I wonder, "What can you tell other people about God today?"
- ▾ I wonder, "What might you tell other people about God when you grow up?"

Remind the children that Jeremiah was a young boy, and he didn't think he could do the job God wanted him to do, but God helped him.

2. Tell a Message

C L

Remind the children that Jeremiah shared God's message with the people. Tell the children that they are going to take turns telling a message to the class. Invite a child to come to you and tell that child a message to share with the rest of the children. If they made megaphones in "Welcoming and Guided Play" choice 2, suggest that they use them to share the message. They can also share the message by saying it, singing it, shouting it, or whispering it. Remind them that they can choose how to share that message.

3. Be the Messenger

LG

Before the session, make copies of GN 3 and GN 4 and cut apart the cards. Make enough copies so each child has three or four cards with different messages.

Read the messages to the children and remind them that these are the messages that Jeremiah shared with the people. Tell them that they can be messengers too by sharing these messages with people in their church. Invite the children to decorate their cards. Go around the church with the children and help them tape cards to doors, walls, pews, and other places where people will see them. The children are the messengers!



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.

Using the same prayer for several sessions is helpful to children. Young children learn by repetition and build confidence with routine.



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).

4. Coloring Page FM

Hand out copies of **GN 5** and crayons. Invite the children to color the picture of Jeremiah. Engage the children in conversation as they color using the following questions:

- ▼ I wonder, “How did Jeremiah feel when God called his name?”
- ▼ I wonder, “How did Jeremiah feel when he heard that God had chosen him?”
- ▼ I wonder, “What did Jeremiah tell the people about God?”

T *Transitions can be difficult. This may be a good time for some quick physical activities, such as reaching up to the sky and bending down to touch toes, clapping hands, and so forth.*

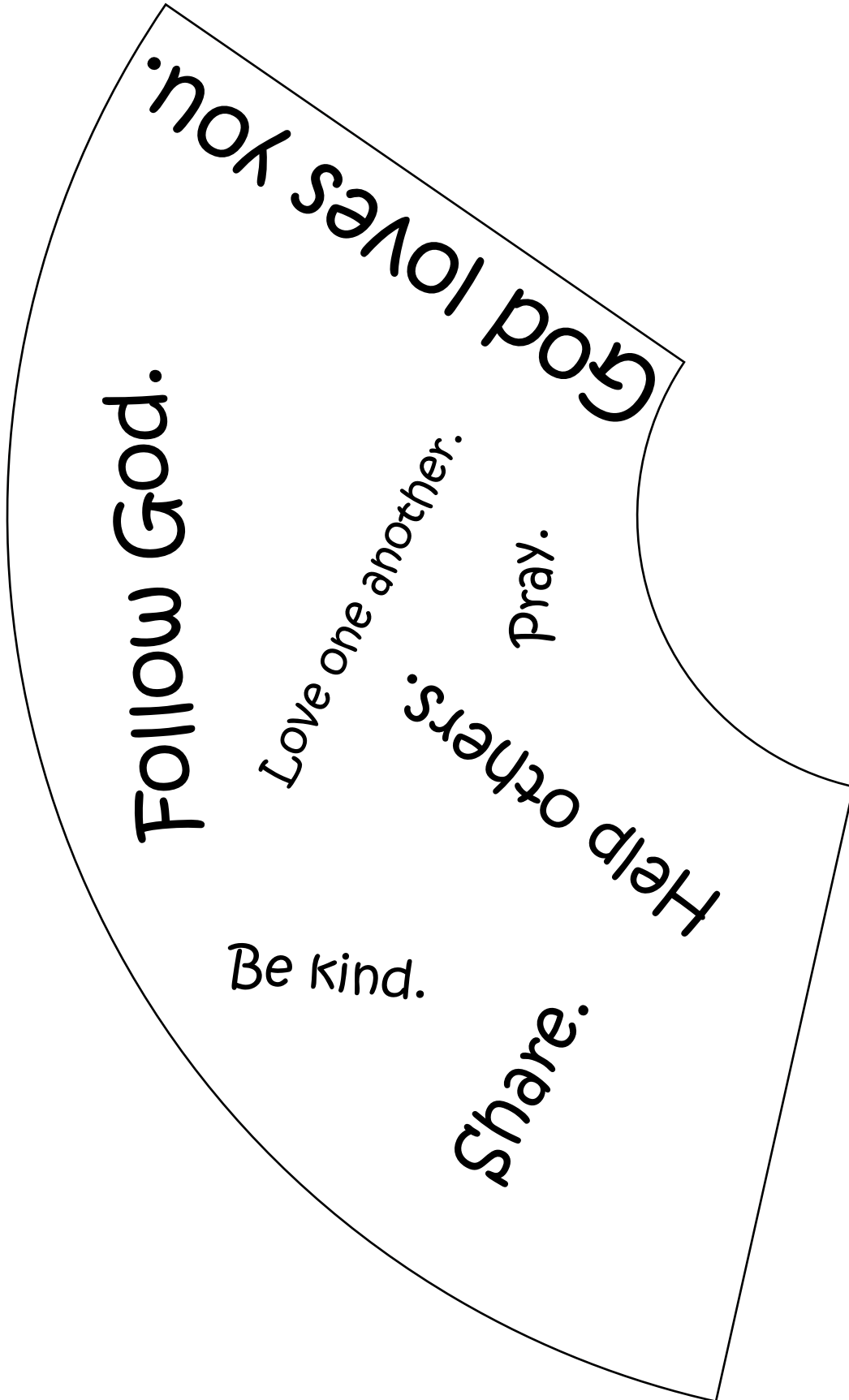
LOVING AND SERVING GOD FA LG

Call the children together, singing “God Takes Care of Me”—**SCM 20**. Tell the children that they are messengers from God, and God has called them to remind people that God cares for them. Ask each child what message they want to tell others about God.

Call the children to snack time. Invite the children to repeat each line of the following prayer, clapping on the **BOLD** words.

We **thank** you, God.
 We **love** you, God.
 For **food** and **friends** and **family**, too,
 We **thank** you, God.
 We **love** you, God.
 Amen! Amen! **Amen!**

As the children leave, bless them. “[Name], God calls you by name. Go and tell God’s message to others.”



Touch your toes.

Sit cross-legged.

Give yourself a hug.

Laugh.

Pat a neighbor on the head.

Turn in a circle.

Reach your arms up high.

Smile.

Give a neighbor a “high five.”

Wiggle your fingers.

Say your name.

Hop two times.

**God loves
you.**

Be kind.

**Help
others.**

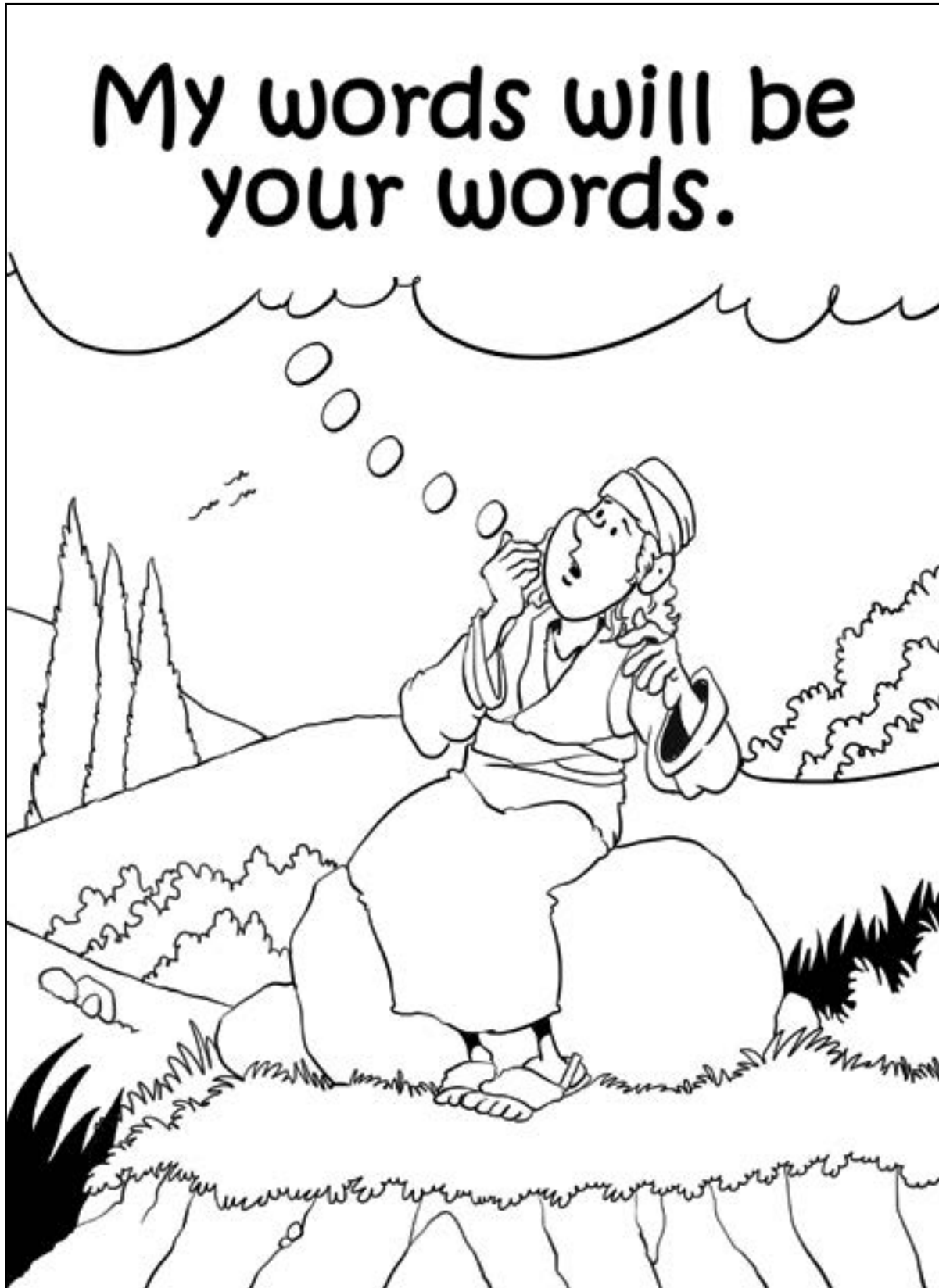
Share.

Pray.

**Follow
God.**

**Love one
another.**

God Calls Jeremiah



God calls Jeremiah, a young boy, to be God's messenger.

