



God Calls for Justice

Goal: To recognize God wants us to be kind and to be fair.

RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

. . . In Amos 1:1; 5:6-8, 10-15, 21-24

The prophet Amos often spoke blistering words to the people of Israel. He warned the people about the consequences of neglecting justice and practicing injustice against the weak (5:11). God calls the people to justice and to “seek the LORD and live” (1:6). If they do not, fire and doom await (vv. 6-9). God’s judgment is sure.

Injustice against the weak occurs when heavy taxes are levied and the rich live luxuriously by “afflicting the righteous, taking money on the side, turning away the poor who seek help” (5:12, CEB). Injustice corrupts worship, which is rejected by God (vv. 21-23).

Amos’s word is to “seek good and not evil, that you may live; and so the LORD, the God of heavenly forces, will be with you just as you have said. Hate evil, love good, and establish justice at the city gate” (vv. 14-15, CEB). Then perhaps God will be gracious (v. 15). Amos proclaims: “But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream” (v. 24).

As those who have experienced God’s grace—Israel in the covenant, we in Jesus Christ—God’s people are to live justice, to care justly for the weak and needy. This is our response of gratitude.

. . . In Your Children’s Experiences

Children have a good sense of fairness. Cutting one slice of cake to make it exactly even for two siblings to share is something they may have experience with. The story of the prophet Amos’s message to God’s people will invite them to go a bit deeper as they consider fairness on a larger scale.

Younger and older children will be able to share examples from their experiences of what is fair and what is not. As you discuss this story with them, you will be able to help them see how God’s hope for us is that we learn how to live together so that all have equal access to what they need to live.

. . . In Your Relationships with the Children

The story for today also offers children a chance to consider what it means to be a good person. It will be really interesting to begin by asking them to think about their response to this statement: “A good person is someone who . . .” This will be a great introduction to telling them the story of the prophet Amos, who looked around and was saddened by how he saw people treating each other.

After telling the story and engaging children with the learning activities, you could return to the statement and see what else the children would like to add.

*O God, inspire me to let justice roll down like waters
and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. Amen.*



Supplies

Music & Melodies

bit.ly/GGGMusicMelodies

Stories, Colors & More (SCM) i-iv, 12, 18, 20

basic supplies
(see p. vii)

internet-connected
device

blanket or mats

candle

Guided Play

choice 3: five paper plates, ten small items of similar size such as crayons, small blocks, fuzzy pom pom balls, and so forth

Exploring

choice 1: copies of **Grace Notes (GN) 1**, two toilet paper tubes for each child

choice 2: rhythm instruments

choice 3: copy of **GN 2** for each child, two stickers with the backing still in place for each child, extra stickers (optional)

choice 4: copies of **GN 3**

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 1, tape a large piece of mural paper to a wall or put it on a table. Draw simple outlines of sheep and draw a large shepherd’s crook on one side.

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

“Exploring God’s Grace” choice 1 requires 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.”

Introduce yourself to the parents/caregivers. Explain to them that the children will hear a story about the shepherd Amos who was a prophet, a messenger for God.

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

1. Making a Mural—Tell the children that today’s story is about a shepherd who becomes a prophet—a messenger for God.

Invite the children to glue cotton balls to the sheep outlines you made. When the children have finished making sheep, invite each child, one at a time, to stand by the shepherd’s crook and pretend to be a shepherd to their flock of sheep. If you have a smartphone, take a picture of each child being a shepherd and share it with the child.

2. Play Pretend—Have the children pretend to be sheep and a shepherd. Encourage them to make sheep sounds. Take turns being the shepherd.

3. Fair Share—Set out five paper plates and ten small items. Put all the items on one plate. Wonder if the five plates are all the same or different. Invite the children to place the same amount of items on each plate. You may need to help younger children put two items on each plate. Ask them again if all the plates are the same and why.

T *Washing hands can take time! Waiting in line for the sink may make some children anxious. Devise a routine for your group so they know what to expect. Use a song, movement poem, or physical activity to match the time required.*



Transitioning to Story Time

When you sense the children are ready to move into your group time, call them to the story corner, singing “God Is with Me”—**SCM 18**.

Come and Hear



Say or sing the following to the tune of “The Bear Went Over the Mountain” and do the motions. Invite the children to join you.

Come and hear God’s story. (*walk four steps to the right*)
 Come and hear God’s story. (*walk four steps to the left*)
 Come and hear God’s story. (*walk four steps to the right*)
 Sit down and fold your hands. (*sit and fold hands*)

Follow Me



Invite the children to repeat each line and follow your motions.

I am looking for God. (*cup hands around eyes*)
 I am following God. (*march in place*)
 I am learning to share. (*move both hands out with palms up*)
 I am being kind. (*pat a neighbor’s shoulder*)
 I am loving God. (*cross hands over chest*)



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.

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 Amos 5 so the children know the story comes from the Bible. Tell the children that they are going to hear a story about the prophet Amos.

Remind them that a prophet is a person called by God to be God’s messenger. Invite the children to listen for the message that Amos has for God’s people.

Read **SCM 12**. 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 again, asking the children to stand when you say, “Change your ways and follow God.” Invite them to act out the ways to change as you read them.

Engage the children in conversation using the following questions:

- ▼ I wonder, “How did Amos feel when he saw people were not following God’s ways?”
- ▼ I wonder, “How did the people feel when some people had more and others had none?”



- ▼ I wonder, “How did Amos feel when the people didn’t listen to God’s message?”
- ▼ I wonder, “Why did the people not want to change their ways?”

Turn off the candle.

EXPLORING GOD’S GRACE



1. Looking for Kindness

LG C

Make a set of binoculars for each child by taping together two toilet paper tubes. Cut out the strip of paper from **GN 1** for each child. Give the children the strip of paper that says, “Looking for Kindness,” and invite them to color the paper. Give them the binoculars and show them how to wrap their strip of paper around the toilet paper tubes to form a covering. Tape the strip of paper in place with the words “Looking for Kindness” on top.

Invite the children to use their “Kindness” binoculars to go around looking for acts of kindness. Talk about what they might see. Suggest that they make a “Kindness” mark on the side of their binoculars when they see an act of kindness. Demonstrate.

2. Singing a Song

L SD

Sing or say the following words to the tune of “Frère Jacques” as a call and response with the children. Instruct them to repeat each line after you.

Leader: God called Amos:

Children: God called Amos:

Leader: Tell God’s Word!

Children: Tell God’s Word!

Leader: Share with one another

Children: Share with one another

Leader: And be kind.

Children: And be kind.

Give the children rhythm instruments and invite them to play them as they respond. Divide the children into two groups and have one group be the “Leader” group and the other group respond. Instruct them to use their instrument when they respond. Switch the “Leader” side and response side.



3. One to Share F

Help the children understand the concept of “fair share” or everyone sharing so that all can have something and not some people with more and some people with less.

Sit in a circle at a table or on the floor. Hand out two stickers with their backing still on and a copy of **GN 2** to each child. Tell them not to put their stickers on their paper yet. Give the child to your right one of your stickers and say, “I want to share this sticker with you.” Invite this child to choose one of their stickers to share with the child on their right, saying, “I want to share this sticker with you.” Have the children repeat this around the circle.

When all have shared a sticker (and everyone has two stickers), invite the children to put the stickers on their paper. Ask the children how many stickers each person has. Ask them if everyone has the same amount of stickers. Tell them that by sharing, everyone has the same amount, or their “fair share.” Remind them that this is what Amos said that God wanted for people, for everyone to share what they have so that no one goes without.

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.

4. Coloring Page FM C

Hand out **GN 3** and crayons. Invite the children to color the picture of Amos seeing some people with a lot of food and some people with none. Engage the children in conversation using the following questions:

- ▼ I wonder, “How do people with no food feel when they see people with a lot of food?”
- ▼ I wonder, “How do people with a lot of food feel when they see people with no food?”

T *Transitions can be difficult. This may be a good time for some quick physical activities, such as standing on tiptoe, crouching down, and waving arms in a circle.*



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).

LOVING AND SERVING GOD

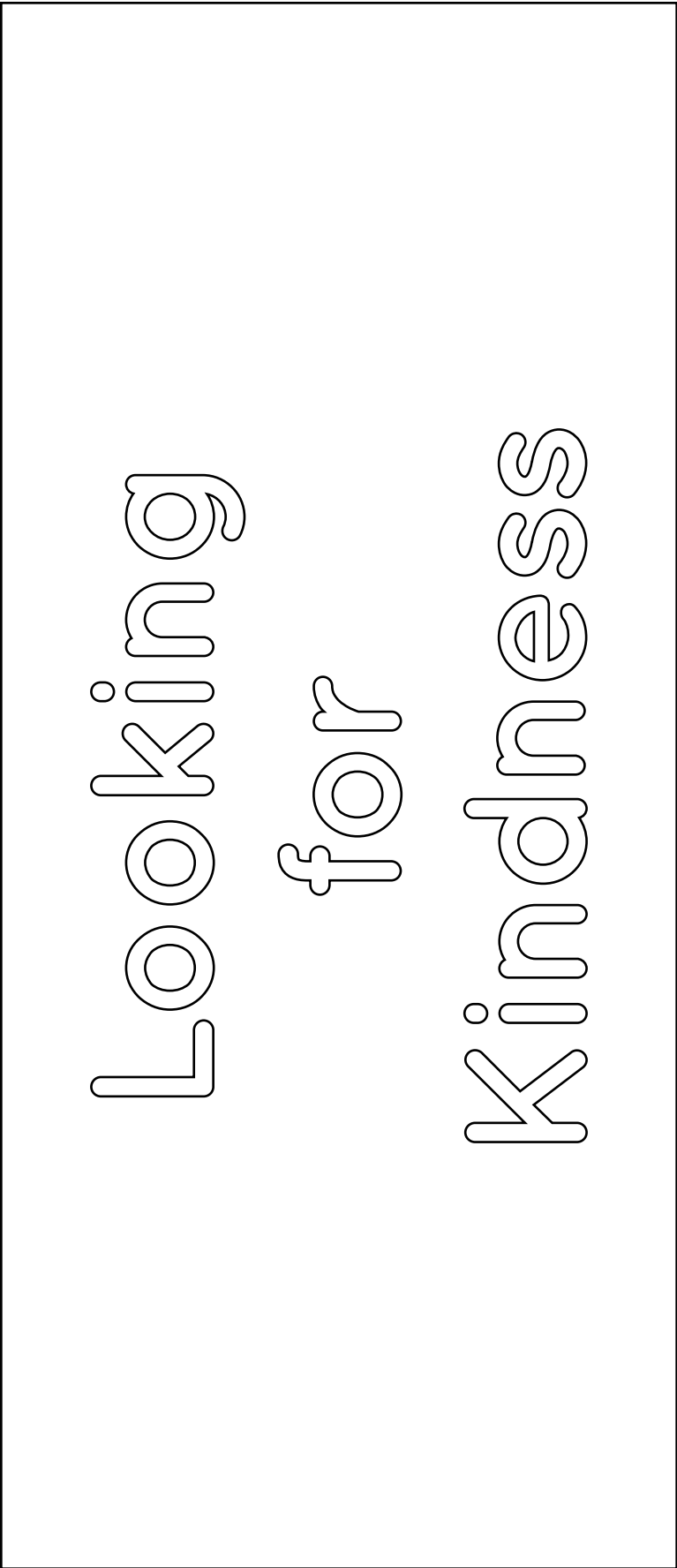


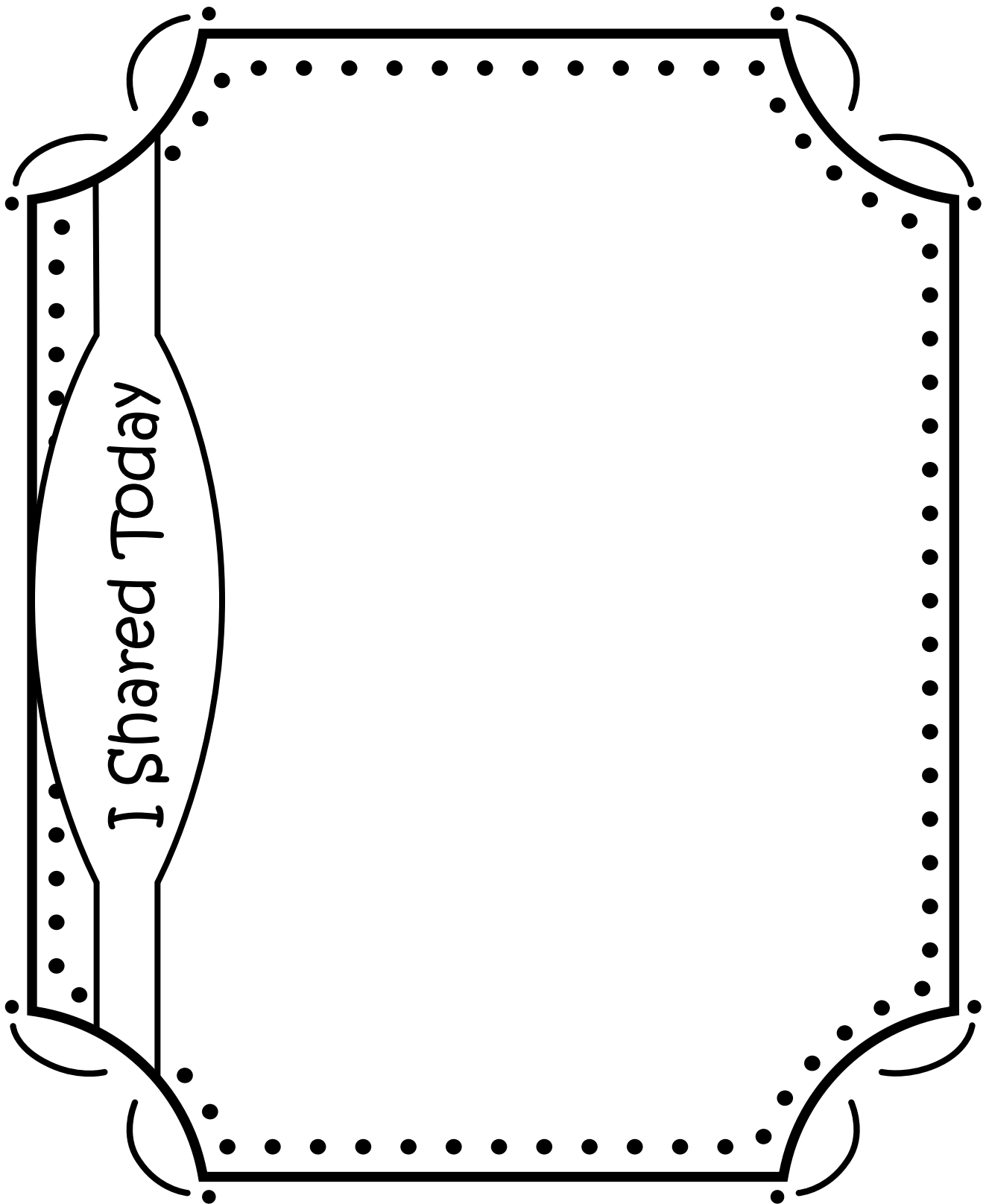
Call the children together, singing “God Takes Care of Me”—SCM 20. Repeat words and phrases as seems appropriate. Ask the children how they will share today.

If you have a snack time, this would be a good time to do it. Invite the children to repeat each line of the following prayer.

Dear God, /
Thank you for food. /
Help us to be kind to others /
And to share with others. /
Amen. /

As the children leave, bless them. “[Name], follow God and be kind to others! Go in God’s grace.”





God Calls for Justice



Amos tells the people with food to share their food with others.

