



God Provides Food and Water

Goal: To know that God is faithful and provides for God's people.

RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

. . . In Exodus 16:1-8, 13-15; 17:1-7

The Hebrew people should have learned their lesson by now. God had provided for them. The pillars of cloud and fire were continuously with them, providing them with visible reminders of God's presence and guidance (Exodus 13). The Red Sea had been parted, allowing them to cross unharmed (Exodus 14).

But now their stomachs were empty and their throats were parched. They grumbled and complained. Moses cried out to God, "What shall I do with this people? They are getting ready to stone me" (17:4).

Through gifts of bread (*manna*, "What is it?") and water, the Hebrews again discovered God's grace and care.

This story illustrates the themes woven throughout the entire narrative of the journey to the promised land—God's guidance, people's complaints, and God's faithfulness. The people were growing bolder and louder in their demands, and Moses cried out in fear to God. At first the people believed they would arrive at their destination in a relatively short time, perhaps days or weeks. Now the journey had stretched to months, perhaps even years, and the end was nowhere in sight.

As one commentary notes, "These wilderness stories are increasingly about a people stuck between promise and fulfillment. Wilderness is no longer simply a place but a state of mind" [Terence E. Fretheim, *Exodus*, Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1991), 187].

. . . In Your Children's Experiences

Keep in mind the focus of this session as you work with the children. Although the story is about the Hebrew people demanding food and water, the focus is on God's faithfulness to the Hebrew people. God provided for their needs as they wandered throughout the desert. How do the children in the group experience God's faithfulness? Helping them make this connection will provide them with something far greater than simply learning a story—it will help them continue building their relationship with God.

. . . In Your Relationships with the Children

As you prepare for this session, think about the characteristics of the children in your care. What things do children generally complain about? How might they complain when they are hungry or thirsty? How might they identify with the Hebrew children? Encourage them to imagine what the Hebrew people felt and experienced.

O God, I am hungry and thirsty for your love. Persuade me to trust that you are always near, providing for my needs. Amen.



Supplies

Music & Melodies

bit.ly/GGGMusicMelodies

Stories, Colors & More (SCM) i-iv, 6, 15, 20

basic supplies
(see p. vii)

internet-connected
device

candle

blanket or mats

toy tea pots, toy
pitchers

crackers, graham
crackers, or a flat bread

Guided Play

choice 1: pictures of
food and drinking water
cut from magazines

choice 2: paper cups
(not plastic coated)

choice 3: tent or
blankets, dress up
clothes, stuffed animals,
kitchen items, grocery
bags

Exploring

choice 2: newspapers,
white tissue paper,
spritzer bottles filled
with blue diluted food
coloring, thin dowels or
paint sticks

choice 3: **SCM 6a**

choice 4: copies of
Grace Notes (GN) 1

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.

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 2 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." Be sensitive to any children who might be coming for the first time.

Introduce yourself to the parents/caregivers that you do not know personally. Explain to them that the children will hear a story about a time God provided food and water for God's people.

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

1. **Making a Food Poster**—Provide pictures of many kinds of food and drinking water cut from magazines. Invite the children to pick one or two pictures of foods that they like to eat and one or two pictures of drinking water that look refreshing. Have a conversation about what they have chosen and why they like that particular food. Help the children to glue their food and water pictures to a piece of paper. By each child's pictures write "(Name) likes to eat and drink . . ."
2. **Decorating Water Cups**—Give each child a paper cup. (Crayons and markers do not work well on plastic-coated cups.) Write the children's names on the bottoms of their cups. Invite them to decorate their cups. Make sure the finished cups have no punctures in them. Put these aside for use at the end of the session.
3. **Going on a Trip**—Set up a tent or drape blankets over tables or chairs to make a pretend tent. Place dress up clothes, stuffed animals, and kitchen items in the tent, along with a few grocery bags. Invite the children to play in the tent and imagine that they are preparing for a trip. Join the children and ask them to show you how they would prepare for a journey.

T *Transitions can be difficult for children. Do not force reluctant children to join a group activity. Instead, allow them to observe quietly from their own play area or to listen to a story read to them by an adult helper until they are ready to join the group.*



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.

Play the “If I Had a Garden” Game L

Begin by sitting in a circle. Say, “If God gave me a garden, I would grow (favorite fruit or vegetable). Point to a child and say, (*Name*), what would you grow?” The child stands and responds, “I would grow (fruit or vegetable).” The child points to another one and says, “What would you grow?” and then sits down. The child answering stands up. Continue until all children that want to participate have spoken.

Move to a Water Poem L

Teach the children the American Sign Language sign for water. In the sidebar, you will see a description of the sign for water. Encourage the children to sign “water” each time they hear the word as you read the following poem:

Water’s wet.
Water’s fun.
Water’s good for everyone.
It falls in raindrops from the sky.
It keeps the lakes from getting dry.
In my bath, it takes off dirt.
It doesn’t sting; it doesn’t hurt.
And when I’m thirsty, then, I think,
Water’s best of all to drink.

The American Sign Language sign for “water” is made by forming your right hand into the letter W. Touch the index finger to your mouth twice. For more information, go to aslpro.com and look for the word “water.”



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 L C

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 Exodus 16 so the children know the story comes from the Bible. Tell the children that they are going to hear a story that happens after God saved God’s people from Egypt and they were hungry and thirsty in the desert.

Read **SCM 6**. Express the emotions of the story in your voice, gestures, and facial expressions. Conclude the story by prompting the children to say, “Amen.”

Ask the children to show you a happy and a sad face. Tell them that as you read the story again, you will pause at points. Invite them to show you either a happy or a sad face depending on how the story makes them feel at that point. For example, after they hear that the people were slaves, they may be sad. Wonder together about God’s gifts to the people when they were in need.



Invite the children to help you say a thank-you prayer:

Thank you, God, for giving food and water to Moses and his people. Thank you, God, for giving food and water to me. Thank you, God, for caring for (*Ask children to say their names when you point to them; say children's names if they are shy.*) Amen.

Turn off the candle.

EXPLORING GOD'S GRACE

1. Acting it Out



Invite the group to pretend to be Moses and the people in the wilderness by acting out the following scenes. Choose someone to be Moses and the voice of God.

- The people get hungry.
- They go to Moses and complain.
- Moses prays to God.
- God says, "There will be bread from heaven each day!"
- The people pick up bread from the ground and eat.
- The people get thirsty.
- They go to Moses and complain.
- Moses prays to God.
- God says, "Take your staff and hit the rock."
- When Moses hits the rock, water comes running out. There is water for the people to drink!

The story may be played more than once with various children pretending to be Moses and God's voice.



2. Making Water Banners



Spread old newspapers on the table or on the floor. Spread out individual sheets of white tissue paper. Invite the children to spritz blue diluted food coloring onto the tissue paper, one or two at a time. Allow the tissue paper to dry thoroughly, then fold over about one inch (or more for a paint stick) at the top and tape the tissue paper down at the back to make a pocket for a dowel or paint stick. Slide in a dowel or paint stick. While the children work, discuss:

- When was a time you got wet?
- What happens when you walk in the rain?
- Can you name something we do with water?
- When was a time when you were really thirsty? What did it feel like? How did it feel when you had something to drink?

When the banners are dry, write the words "God gives the people water" with a permanent marker on each banner.



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.

3. Searching for Manna

Before the session, cut apart the crackers on **SCM 6a**. Hide these around the room. Tell the children to search until they find a cracker, and then they can help others find crackers until all find one.

4. Coloring Page

C

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

- ▼ I wonder, “What did the people think when they saw bread appear each morning?”
- ▼ I wonder, “What did the bread taste like?”
- ▼ I wonder, “How did they collect the water to drink?”

T *Transitions can be difficult. This may be a good time for some quick physical activities, such as crouching down and jumping up, turning in a circle, or marching around the room.*

LOVING AND SERVING GOD

FA

Call the children together, singing “God Takes Care of Me”—**SCM 20**. Repeat words and phrases as seems appropriate.

Give children the cups they decorated during “Welcoming and Guided Play.” If you have access to a water fountain nearby, the children will enjoy filling their own cups, or you can provide toy teapots or toy pitchers filled with water so each child can fill his or her own cup.

Remind the children that God also gave the people food to eat in the wilderness. Serve crackers, graham crackers, or a flat bread.

Go around the circle, asking each child to name one thing for which she or he is thankful. End with a simple prayer, such as:

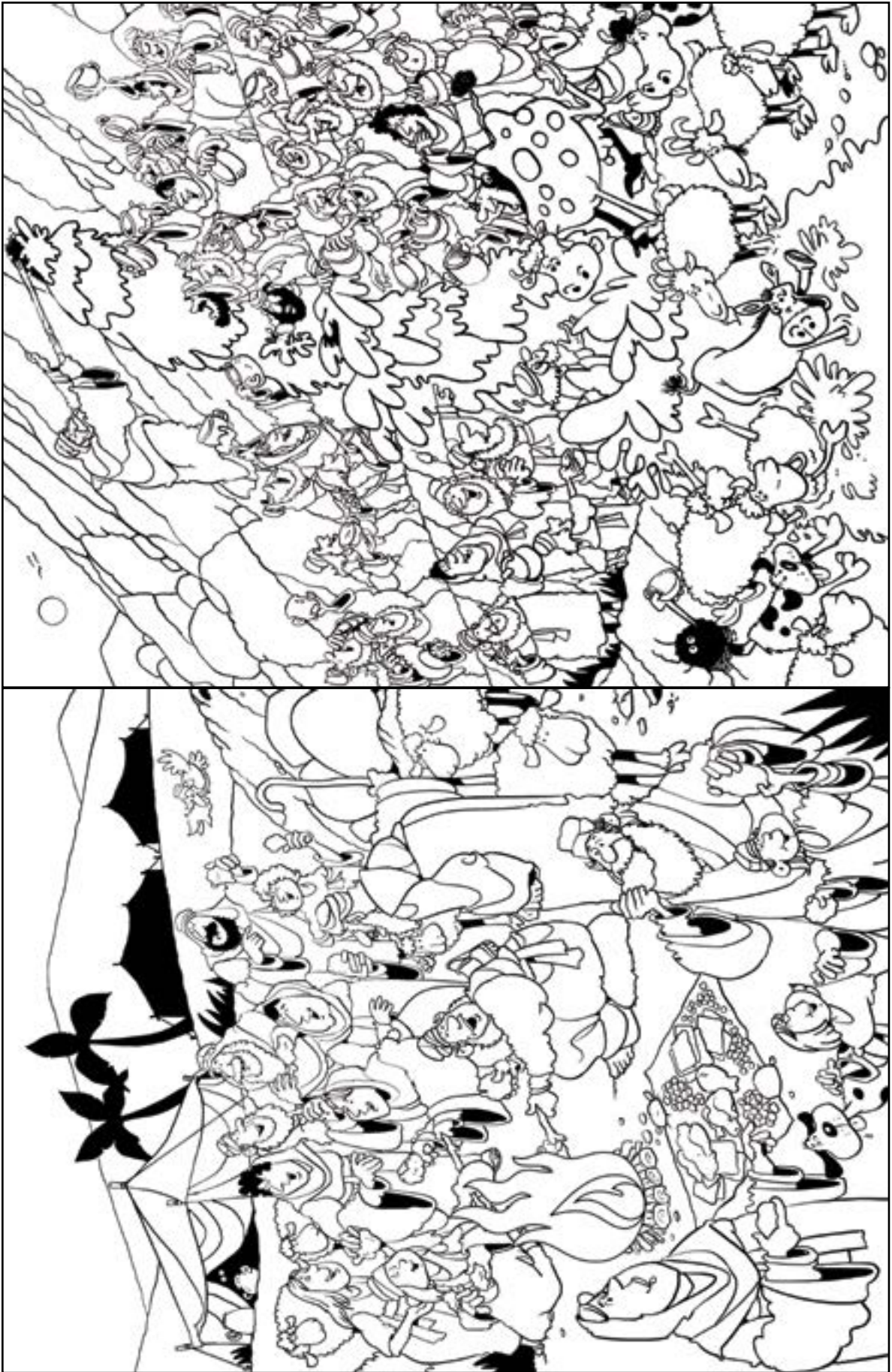
Thank you, God, for the food and water before us.
Thank you, God, for the friends beside us.
Thank you, God, for the love between us. Amen.

Tell the children to find things they are thankful for each day of the week. As the children leave, bless them: “(Name), God helps you. The grace of God is with you.”



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).

God Provides Food and Water



God gives people what they need for their journey.

