



God Proclaims Jubilee

Goal: To rest and celebrate God's gracious gifts.

RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

. . . In Leviticus 25:1-12, 25-28, 35-42

On Mt. Sinai, God gave several provisions to Moses for ways the nation of Israel was to live. One was that every seventh year, the land was to have a “sabbath,” a year of freedom and rest when it was not worked by humans. This was “a Sabbath to the LORD” (25:4, CEB). All people were to have access to what the land produced on its own.

After seven sabbatical years, or at fifty years, a “Jubilee year” was to be celebrated. It was to be made “holy, proclaiming freedom throughout the land to all its inhabitants” (v. 10, CEB) and everyone was to “return to your family property and to your extended family.” In the Jubilee year, land would revert to its original owners and “all inhabitants”—including slaves and servants—would be freed (compare with Leviticus 25:23-55; 27:16-25; and Numbers 36:4). This was to prevent the growth of large estates and to help those in need.

These provisions point to the theological conviction that all land belongs to God. The people of Israel were only tenants. To let the land rest and practice “jubilee” was to highlight this conviction. God's grace gives the land. The people use it with gratitude.

. . . In Your Children's Experiences

Children are keenly aware of the need for rest: time for renewing their bodies with good sleep so they can wake refreshed to begin a new day. This story from Leviticus of celebrating a jubilee year to renew and refresh the earth may be a new concept for the children, but it is one with which they will be able to connect. Help them see how the ways we care for the earth are just as important as the ways we help our bodies rest.

The story for today talks about jubilee as a time of forgiveness. Invite the children to imagine the things that could be forgiven if there was a jubilee year proclaimed.

. . . In Your Relationships with the Children

Children will probably be familiar with the word *Sabbath* in connection to Sunday as the Sabbath, a day to gather with others in community at church. You can help them remember the creation story in the first chapter of Genesis and how God created the seventh day for humans to rest. The story for today extends the concept of rest to include how we let the land rest and, in doing so, how we say thank you to God by taking care of the created world that has been given to our care.

The year of jubilee also focused on remembering and forgiving in preparation for moving ahead. Children will be able to share their own stories of times when they have been forgiven or a time when they forgave someone else.

*Holy God, help me to keep your justice in my heart.
Guide me as I try to walk in your way. Amen.*



Supplies

Music & Melodies

bit.ly/GGGMusicMelodies

Stories, Colors & More (SCM) i-iv, 7, 21

basic supplies
(see p. vii)

internet-connected
device

blanket or mats

candle

Guided Play

choice 1: groups of seven similar objects, such as small toy cars, small toy animals, crayons, and so forth

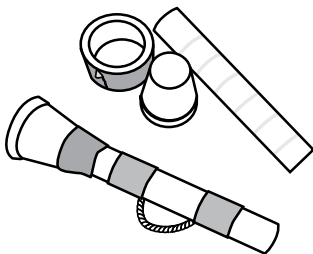
choice 2: paper cups with bottoms cut out, several colors of duct tape, 6-inch pieces of string

choice 3: farm toys (optional)

Exploring

choice 3: plastic spoons; clear plastic cups; potting soil; radish, leaf lettuce, or baby carrot seeds; water

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.

Before the session, for “Welcoming and Guided Play” choice 1, place a large sheet of mural paper on a table. Draw seven circles in a row in several different places on the paper.

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 3 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 year of Jubilee, a time when God instructed the people to rest and celebrate.

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

1. **Counting**—Invite the children to show each other groups of seven similar objects, such as small toy cars, small toy animals, crayons, and so forth. Have fun counting to seven with the children as they place objects in the circles on the mural paper.
2. **Make a Trumpet**—Invite the children to make a trumpet. Show them how to put the cut-out end of the paper cup over the end of the paper towel tube. Have them choose a color of duct tape and tape the cup to the end of the tube. Have them choose two more pieces of tape. Wrap each piece of tape around the tube, about one-third and two-thirds of the tube, securing the string between the pieces of tape and making a handle with the string. Invite the children to decorate their trumpets.
3. **Farming**—Invite them to pantomime farming activities such as planting seeds, raking, hoeing, weeding, gathering crops, and so forth. Invite the children to play with farm toys you may have.

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 “Dance and Sing”—SCM 21. Repeat words and phrases as it seems appropriate.

Jump and Shout

MS

Using the song “If You’re Happy and You Know It,” teach the children the following song:

If you’re happy and you know it,
Jump and shout! (*jump and shout*)
If you’re a happy and you know it,
Jump and shout! (*jump and shout*)
If you’re happy and you know it,
Then your face will surely show it.
If you’re happy and you know it,
Sit and rest! (*sit down, hands in lap*)

Follow the Leader

MS

Invite the children to line up behind you, follow you around the room, and do what you do. Wander to all the corners of the room. Every so often, turn around or touch the ground. You can shout out some phrases, but as you get close to your story corner, begin whispering. Sit down in the story corner with your hands in your lap.

Hearing the Story

L

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 Leviticus 25 so the children know the story comes from the Bible.

Tell the children that they are going to hear a story about the year of Jubilee, a time when God told the people to rest and celebrate.

Read **SCM 7**. 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. Give the children the trumpets they made in “Welcoming and Guided Play” choice 2 and teach them the response. Invite them to follow your instructions as to when to use the trumpets and respond.

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. Six and Rest

L MS

Remind the children that the people of God planted crops for six years and then rested in the seventh year. Tell the children they are going to play a game where you call out different actions for them to do. Call out the following actions, saying the number first. For example, "One, jump up and down. Two, turn in a circle." At seven, shout, "Jubilee! Sit and rest!" Repeat the game seven times.

1. Jump up and down.
2. Turn in a circle.
3. Touch your toes.
4. Wave your arms in the air.
5. March.
6. Clap your hands.
7. Jubilee! Sit and rest!

2. Wandering and Jubilee

L C

Take the children on a journey around your church building. Tell them that they are wandering in the wilderness. Return to your room and stop outside the door. Tell them that God has special instructions for you. You will have jobs to do and then you will rest and celebrate. Enter the room and invite the children to find a space of their own.

Give them the following instructions:

1. Pretend to build a house.
2. Pretend to plant a garden.
3. Pretend to take care of a baby.
4. Pretend to pull fruit from a tree.
5. Pretend to take care of a pet.
6. Pretend to eat a meal at a table.

After each instruction, individually engage the children in conversation inquiring what they are doing. For example, ask: "What are you planting in your garden?" or "What kind of pet are you taking care of?"

Now tell the children that they have worked hard, and it is time for Jubilee, a time to celebrate. Invite the children to jump up and down and shout, "Wheee! It's Jubilee!"



3. Planting Seeds



Cover your work area. Set out a bin with potting soil. Give each child a clear plastic cup and a spoon. Invite them to fill their cups about two-thirds full with soil.

While they are working, wonder together about how much work the farmers in the story would have done to plant seeds in a large farm. Let the children sprinkle some seeds in their cups. Have them spoon a little more soil over the seeds and use the spoon to add a little water over the soil and seeds. (Using just the spoon to add water may prove a little messy, but it will discourage drowning the seeds.)

Encourage the children to take their cups home. Tell them that they should add just a little water each day and that the seeds should grow into vegetables if they take care of them.

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



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

- ▼ I wonder, “What did the people do when they didn’t have to farm for a year?”
- ▼ I wonder, “How did the people celebrate?”
- ▼ I wonder, “What does the horn in the picture sound like?”

T *Transitions can be difficult. This may be a good time for some quick physical activities, such as touching their toes, reaching to the sky, and circling their arms.*

LOVING AND SERVING GOD



Call the children together, singing “Dance and Sing”—**SCM 21**. Repeat words and phrases as it seems appropriate. Ask the children when they can take a rest today.

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 is always with you, when you play and when you rest.”



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 Proclaims Jubilee



God's people celebrate a time to rest.

