



# Spreading the Good News

**Goal:** To discover ways that God's love turns expectations upside down.

## RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

### . . . In Luke 4:16-30

Jesus went to Nazareth to visit the town and the synagogue where he grew up. At first, the people marveled at the gracious words coming from Jesus' mouth (v. 22). The people saw Jesus only as the son of Mary and Joseph, the boy they had watched grow up in their city (v. 28). To make matters worse, they wanted Jesus to perform the same miracles he had done in Capernaum, but he refused.

Then Jesus reminded the people of God's grace extended to the Gentiles. Jesus named two instances in which God's prophets reached out with God's grace to Gentiles while Israel was in unbelief—Elijah and the widow of Zarephath (vv. 25-26; compare 1 Kings 17:8-16), and Elisha and Naaman the Syrian leper (v. 27; compare 2 Kings 5:1-19). Jesus' remarks filled the people of Nazareth with rage (v. 29) because he was saying that God chooses to offer grace and acceptance to both Jews and Gentiles.

Miraculously, Jesus slipped through the crowd unharmed (v. 30). Thus, his active ministry began.

### . . . In Your Children's Experiences

Children today, even in less-populated areas, are more aware of diversity around them. They encounter other ethnic groups and religious groups in their schools and community. Unfortunately, they may also be aware of how diversity can spark anger. This session provides a place to counter such anger and actions. As children grow older, they may experience cliques at school and in other settings where they are excluded or encouraged by peers to exclude other children. Children can follow Jesus' ministry by standing up to bullies or helping others who have been bullied.

### . . . In Your Relationships with the Children

Consider the different ways children experience and learn about the world. As you plan activities and design a learning environment, keep in mind the diversity of the children in your group and the needs that may be expressed. Recall the ideas in the story that spoke to you and consider whether these same ideas might have a point of connection with the children. Look for ways to affirm that God loves all people, including people who look or speak differently. As you model acceptance of others, the children will learn by your example that you too are a disciple of Jesus.

*God of all people, help me hear your message  
of broad acceptance of others today. Amen.*



## Supplies

### Music & Melodies

[bit.ly/GGGMusicMelodies](http://bit.ly/GGGMusicMelodies)

### Stories, Colors & More (SCM) i-iv, 10, 19, 23

basic supplies  
(see p. vii)

internet-connected  
device

blankets or mats

snack (optional)

## Guided Play

choice 1: copies of **Grace  
Notes (GN) 1**

choice 2: several plastic  
spoons

## Exploring

choice 2: newspaper

choice 3: copies of  
**GN 2** on card stock,  
shaving cream, food  
coloring

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.

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

“Exploring God’s Grace” choices 2 and 3 require more prep.

### Welcoming and Guided Play



Greet the 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 who you do not know personally. Explain to them that the children will hear a story about when Jesus was in his hometown and told the people that he had come to tell the good news of God’s love for everyone.

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

**1. Good News from Jesus**—Invite the children to color a copy of **GN 1**. As they color, wonder with them what good news Jesus has to give. Write down their thoughts above Jesus on their papers.

**2. News Reporter Corner**—Set out several plastic spoons. Encourage the children to take turns holding a spoon to their mouth like a microphone and telling a story as a reporter on television would. Wonder with them about the good news that Jesus has to share.

**3. Play Dough**—Give the children play dough and invite them to build a synagogue (like a church building) where Jesus is preaching to a group of people. Have a conversation about what he would be saying and what he would want them to do after listening to his words.

**T** *Younger children need routine. The sense of security and order is how they know what comes next. Remember to use the Visual Schedule to reinforce the routine.*



## Transitioning to Story Time

When you sense the children are ready to move into group time, call them to the story corner, singing “Jesus Loves Me”—**SCM 23**. Ask the children to create movements for the song. Repeat words and phrases as seems appropriate.

### Follow the Teacher

T B MS

Invite the children to follow you as you go and tap each child on the shoulder. Instruct them to get in line behind you and follow where you go. Wander throughout the room and end at the story corner.

### Jump and Shout

MS

Say the following poem and do the motions indicated, inviting the children to repeat each phrase.

God made me to jump and shout. (*jump*)

God made me to move about. (*wiggle hips*)

God made me to wiggle around, (*wave arms and turn in a circle*)

and God made me to sit right down. (*sit cross-legged on the ground and fold hands in lap*)



## Hearing the Story

C L

Open the Bible to Luke 4 so the children know the story comes from the Bible. Tell the children that they are going to hear a story about what happened after Jesus went to his hometown and told the people that he came to tell the good news of God’s love for everyone.

Read **SCM 10**. Express the emotions of the story in your voice, gestures, and facial expressions. Conclude the story by prompting the children to say, “Amen.”

Tell the children that this is the part of the story when Jesus read the words of the prophet Isaiah in the synagogue. Remind them that Isaiah was a messenger from God. In this part, we see the reaction of the people to what Jesus said.

Read the story again. Engage the children in conversation by using the following questions to check for understanding.

- ▼ Where was Jesus?
- ▼ Why do you think the people hearing Jesus got angry?
- ▼ What did they do when they got angry?
- ▼ Who was not angry at Jesus?
- ▼ What was Jesus’ good news?



## EXPLORING GOD'S GRACE

### 1. Jesus Says



Remind the children that Jesus read the Scripture in the synagogue and said he was the one God sent to tell the people about God's love. Tell the children that they are going to see if they can figure out what Jesus would say and what Jesus would not say.

Play Jesus Says. Tell the children to jump up and shout, "Yes!" if Jesus would say it and sit down and say, "No!" if it is not something Jesus would say. Begin by sitting on the ground or chairs. Use the following or make up your own.

- ✦ Jesus says, "I will help you follow God's ways."
- ✦ Jesus says, "I have good news for everyone."
- ✦ Jesus says, "God loves only people who wear nice clothes."
- ✦ Jesus says, "God's Spirit is upon me."
- ✦ Jesus says, "Don't love people who are different from you."
- ✦ Jesus says, "Only people who are rich follow God's ways."
- ✦ Jesus says, "I came to help everyone follow God's ways."
- ✦ Jesus says, "God's love is for everyone!"



### 2. Good News!



*Before the session, cut out an 8" heart for each child from a news section of a newspaper. Cut out a 9" heart from colored construction paper for each child. Write "Good News! God loves you!" on a sheet of newsprint.*

Remind the children that while some people may have thought what Jesus had to say was not good news for them, Jesus had good news to tell everyone about God's love. Tell the children that they are going to make "Good News!" hearts to remind them of Jesus' message that they can share with another person.

Give each child a newspaper heart and a construction paper heart. Have them glue the newspaper heart on the construction paper heart. Show the children the newsprint with the message, "Good News! God loves you!" and invite them to copy the words on their hearts. Assist children as needed or write the words for younger children. Encourage the children to decorate their hearts. Ask them with whom they would like to share this good news.



### 3. Spreading the God's Love



Tell the children that they can spread the good news of God's love too. Have the children put on paint smocks. Squirt about 2 to 3 tablespoons of shaving cream in individual bowls. Ask volunteers to put a few drops of food coloring in each bowl and mix it with plastic spoons. Note to the children that the color is spreading throughout the shaving cream.

Give each child a copy of **GN 2** on card stock. Read the words on the page aloud. Have the children fold their papers in half on the dotted line. Show the children how to drop small amounts of the colored shaving cream on the top half of their sheet with the spoons. Then fold the sheet at the crease and press down on the paper, spreading the shaving cream from one side to the other. Open the paper and see how the colors spread, just like the good news can spread as we share it with others.

Help the children wipe the excess shaving cream off with a paper towel and allow the card to dry. Have extra copies available if children would like to experiment with different colors or designs.

### 4. Coloring Page



Hand out copies of **GN 3** and crayons. Invite the children to color the picture. Engage the children in conversation as they color by using the following wondering questions.

- ▼ I wonder, "Why were some people happy to see Jesus?"
- ▼ I wonder, "Why were some people angry with Jesus?"
- ▼ I wonder, "What do you think Jesus will do next?"

**T** *When lining up, consider setting an order each time. For example, one time have children wearing blue line up first, another time have children whose name starts with J line up first. Engaging them while they transition lends order and draws attention away from undesired behavior.*

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](http://www.pcusastore.com/GGGdownloads), where they can download coloring pages, *Grace Sightings*, audio stories, and songs (see p. vii).

## LOVING AND SERVING GOD

FA

Call the children together, singing “He Came Down”—**SCM 19**. Repeat words and phrases as seems appropriate. Ask the children what they can do to spread the good news of Jesus this week.

If you would like to have a snack, now would be a good time. Pray:

A, B, C, D, E, F, G. Thank you, God, for feeding me.

H, I, J, K. Hear us pray.

L, M, N, O. Here we go.

P, Q, R, S, T, U, V. Thank you, God, for hearing me.

W, X, Y, and Z. Thank you, God, for loving me.

Amen!

As the children leave, bless them: “(Name), God loves you! God loves all! The grace of God is with you.”





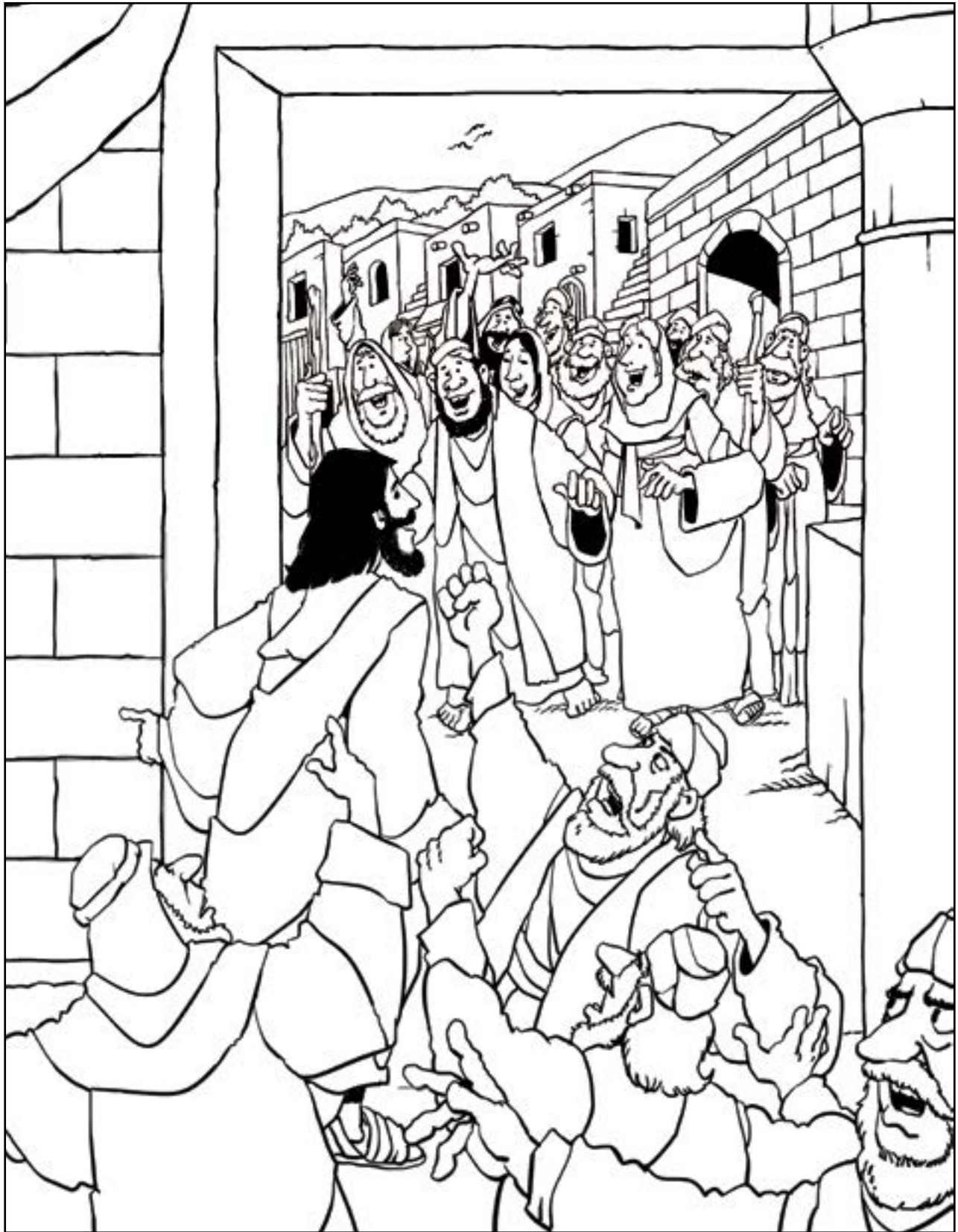


Jesus spread  
the good news  
of God's love.

I can spread  
the good news too!



# Spreading the Good News



Jesus went out to spread God's good news of love.

