



## Blessed Are . . .

Goal: To practice being a blessing by helping others.

### RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

#### . . . In Luke 6:17-26

People in Jesus' time were quite familiar with beatitudes. They were a common literary form of blessing. The Hebrew Scriptures included more than fifty different "blessed is . . ." sentences. Each blessing promised a reward.

Jesus, a faithful Jew, offered a fresh take on these traditional blessings. His beatitudes offered happiness to people who seemed to be the least blessed in society. The rewards they offered included life in Jesus' new vision of society where "the last will be first."

These sayings appear in both Matthew's and Luke's Gospels, but with different wording to express the two writers' different interpretations of who Jesus was. The phrase that in Luke is "blessed are you who are poor" turns up in Matthew as "blessed are the poor in spirit." One refers to poverty and the other to personal spirituality.

The blessings in today's reading encouraged and empowered Christians to follow Jesus' way by offering hope to people in especially difficult times. Paradoxically, they offered blessings to people in ill fortune, because these people would know happiness in the society for which Jesus longed.

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

Younger children love repetition in storytelling. The repetitive structure of these four blessings, so like the ones they learned last week, will make it possible for children to commit them to memory. Encourage them to share the blessings with friends and members of their families.

Be sure to invite older children to dig more deeply into the meaning behind the blessings. Emphasize the concrete ways we can all work for justice. Be open to hearing children share their own experiences with poverty, hunger, and bullying. Unfortunately, all too many young people in our communities experience being bullied or marginalized. Listen carefully to the stories that older children share and affirm their insights.

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

Younger children will like the ways in which Jesus blessed people. Many will have had experiences of a teacher, grandparent, or older friend praising and encouraging them. In this session, provide them with opportunities to bless others with their encouragement and support.

Older children may be more interested in exploring the concrete realities that Jesus was addressing. For them, the poor are people who struggle with real challenges. Encourage older children to grapple with the challenges Jesus raised when he blessed the most marginalized and vulnerable in our society.

*Loving God, I am a child of yours. Bless me  
that I might be a blessing to others. Amen.*



## Supplies

### Music & Melodies

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

### Stories, Colors & More (SCM) i–iv, 12, 19, 24

basic supplies  
(see p. vii)

internet-connected  
device

blanket or mats

snack (see “Guided  
Play” choice 1)

## Guided Play

choice 1: copies of **Grace**

**Notes (GN) 1**, bugle  
snacks, small pretzels,  
dried cranberries,  
candy-coated chocolate  
pieces

choice 2: bottles of  
bubbles

choice 3: stuffed  
animals and or action  
figures

## Exploring

choice 2: two sets of  
the following items:  
play food, plastic cup,  
bandage, article of  
clothing, stuffed animal

choice 4: copies of **GN 2**

## 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 who have special needs or disabilities.

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

Before the session, set a table with bowls of the items needed to make the blessing snack in “Guided Play” choice 1. Place a large spoon in each bowl.

### 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 Jesus telling people how they are blessed by God.

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

- 1. Make a Blessing Snack Mix**—Provide zip closure plastic bags. Make sure to have the children wash their hands. Invite them to make a Blessing Mix to have as a snack later in the session by placing a spoonful of each item in their bags. Suggest that the children can take turns using the spoons and that they can help each other by holding a bag for a friend while they spoon in an ingredient. Tell the children to use only the spoons and not their hands, as they will be sharing the snack with one another. Prompt the children to put the ingredient list from **GN 1** in the bag so they can take it and make it at home.
- 2. Bubbles**—Give the children bubbles to play with as you tell them that God’s love is like bubbles floating all around us.
- 3. Role Play**—Provide several stuffed animals and or action figures. Encourage the children to role-play situations where toys can help each other.

**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 group time, call them to the story corner, singing “He Came Down”—**SCM 19**. Repeat words and phrases as seems appropriate.

### Helping God

L

Invite the children to follow your motions as you say the poem.

One little mouth to speak, (*point to mouth*)  
one little nose, two little cheeks, (*point to nose and cheeks*)  
two little eyes to see, (*point to eyes*)  
all my ten little toes. (*point to toes and wiggle toes*)

One, two, three, four, five, (*hold up fingers one at a time on one hand*)

six, seven, eight, nine, ten. (*hold up fingers one at a time on the other hand*)

Ten fingers and two hands. (*hold up hands and clap*)

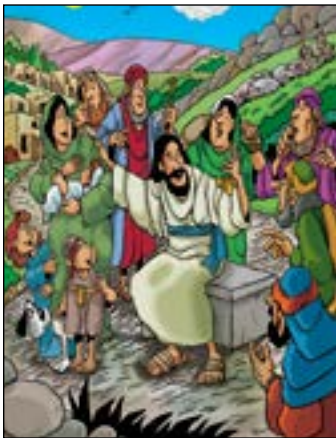
We can help God! Yes, we can! (*raise hands in the air and wave them*)

### Be a Friend

L M

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

If you want to make a friend, shake a hand.  
If you want to be a friend, give high five!  
If you want to have a friend, be a friend that never ends.  
If you want to be a friend, give a hug.



### Hearing the Story

L MS

Open the Bible to Luke 6 so the children know the story comes from the Bible. Tell the children that they are going to hear a story about Jesus telling people how they are blessed by God.

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.”

After you have read the story, read the story again, inviting the children to wave their hands in the air and wiggle their fingers as they move their hands down, like being showered with blessings, when they hear the word “blessed” or “blessing.” Encourage them to jump for joy at the end of the story.



## EXPLORING GOD'S GRACE

### 1. Blessing Mural



*Before the session, write the title, “We Are God’s Blessings” at the top of a sheet of mural paper. On the bottom, write, “Trace your hand. Then write your name and how you are a helper on your hand print. You are a blessing too!”*

Remind the children that God loves and blesses everyone. When we help others, share, and pray for them, we show God’s love and blessings to those in need. Tell the children that they are going to make a mural to remind people in your church that they are blessings too.

Show the children the mural paper and read the title and instructions aloud. Invite the children to trace their hand or assist them as needed. Have them write their name in their hand print, or write it for them. Ask them how they are God’s blessing to others by being a helper. Write their answer in their hand print. Hang the mural in a common area of your church and place markers nearby.

### 2. Blessing Relay



Remind the children that when they offer help to a person in need, they are sharing God’s love and blessings. Tell the children that they are going to play a relay game where they show how they may be a blessing to others. Show the items you have gathered and how they would help someone in need:

- ▼ play food for someone who is hungry
- ▼ a plastic cup for someone who is thirsty
- ▼ a bandage for someone who is hurt
- ▼ an article of clothing for someone who needs clothes
- ▼ a stuffed animal for someone who is sad.

Give the children the following instructions:

- ▼ Take turns running to the items on the other side of the room and choose one item to bring back.
- ▼ Say to the next person in line, “I brought you (item) because you are (reason why).”
- ▼ The person receiving the item says, “Thank you. God loves me. You are a blessing,” runs back to the other side with the item, and takes another item, repeating the play.



You may play in one group or two. Items may be repeated as the children wish. When the play is over, wonder with the children:

- ▼ I wonder, “How does it feel to be a person who helps, who shows God’s love and blessings?”
- ▼ I wonder, “How does it feel to be a person being helped, receiving God’s blessing and knowing God’s love?”

### 3. You’re a Blessing Song



Remind the children that they show God’s love when they help others. In that way, they are sharing God’s blessings by being a blessing to others. Teach the children the following song to the tune “If You’re Happy and You Know It” and invite them to follow your actions.

If you’re a blessing and you know it, clap your hands.

*(clap hands)*

If you’re a blessing and you know it, clap your hands.

*(clap hands)*

If you help each other out, then you must surely shout.

*(shout “Woo-hoo!”)*

You’re a blessing and we know it; clap your hands.

*(clap hands)*

If you’re a blessing and you know it, stomp your feet.

*(stomp feet)*

If you’re a blessing and you know it, stomp your feet.

*(stomp feet)*

If you know that it is good to share some extra food,

*(move hands outward to each other)*

you’re a blessing and we know it; stomp your feet.

*(stomp feet)*

If you’re a blessing and you know it, shout, “Hooray!”

*(shout “Hooray!”)*

If you’re a blessing and you know it, shout, “Hooray!”

*(shout “Hooray!”)*

If you like to show God’s love, then give a friend a hug.

*(give a hug)*

You’re a blessing and we know it; shout, “Hooray!”

*(shout “Hooray!”)*



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 C

Hand out copies of **GN 2** 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, “How did the people feel when they heard that God blessed them?”
- ▼ I wonder, “What kinds of blessing has God given you?”
- ▼ I wonder, “How can we be a blessing to others?”

**T** *Transitions can be difficult. This may be a good time for some quick physical activities, such as take giant steps, pretend to bounce like you are riding a camel, bow down, and so forth.*

### LOVING AND SERVING GOD T FA

Call the children together, singing “I’m Gonna Live So God Can Use Me”—**SCM 24**. You have used this song before, so try singing the whole song with the children. Help them as needed.

Encourage the children to be a blessing to someone this week, showing God’s love by being a helper.

If you would like to share the Blessing Snack Mix made in “Guided Play” choice 1, now would be a good time. Pray:

For food to eat, (*raise hands to mouth*)  
and friends to share, (*hold hands out*)  
for those we love everywhere, (*place hands over heart*)  
we thank you, God. (*put hands together in prayer*)

Encourage the children to give a bag of the Blessing Snack Mix to another person, being a blessing and receiving a blessing.

As the children leave, bless them: “(Name), you are a blessing! 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](http://www.pcusastore.com/GGGdownloads), where they can download coloring pages, *Grace Sightings*, audio stories, and songs (see p. vii).

**Blessing Snack Mix**

Bugle-shaped snacks remind us of a horn announcing God's love and a horn of plenty, a container that is full of God's blessings.

Pretzels remind us of arms folded in thanks and prayer for all God's blessings.

Dried cranberries remind us of the sweetness of God's love (and they are red!).

Candy-coated chocolate pieces remind us of our memories of God's many blessings in our lives.

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Jesus said with great kindness, "God loves you all the time."

