



God's Way to Live

Goal: To practice God's way to live: loving, giving, and forgiving.

RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

. . . In Luke 6:27-38

Enemies and war were a part of day-to-day life in Judah, the country where Jesus was born and grew up. The Romans had ruled Judah since 63 bc. The Jewish people frequently rioted, sometimes led by those who claimed they were the long-awaited messiah. First-century Jewish historian Flavius Josephus wrote of a powerful revolt in Galilee that took place sometime in Jesus' lifetime. According to his report, the Romans crushed the revolt and then crucified two thousand Galileans. It is against this confrontational and violent backdrop that Jesus said, "Love your enemies."

Jesus' words may have shocked some members of his audience. Some may have wondered how he could preach love toward those who had treated their people so badly. Among Jesus' listeners may have been people plotting armed rebellion. How dismayed and disappointed they would have been if they were hoping to finally overthrow the Romans under Jesus' leadership! They may have believed that he was a frightened coward or a Roman agent hired to quell a riot.

. . . In Your Children's Experiences

Many of your children will have heard parents or teachers say to children, "I like you, but I don't like what you are doing." This familiar phrase may help all ages to understand how Jesus could, on the one hand, teach about changing injustices and caring for victims of oppression and, on the other hand, teach about loving and praying for our enemies.

Children are often exposed to violent television programs that portray conflicts between powerful creatures and super heroes. In these dramas, enemies are often those who are somehow different and "evil." Reflect on how you can help children explore their understanding of who an enemy is while encouraging them to think critically about why some people are labeled as enemies while others are not.

. . . In Your Relationships with the Children

Create a safe environment where everyone's input is taken seriously and anxious feelings are acknowledged and accepted. Some children may be aware of people who are a threat to world peace or a particular group that has oppressed another group. Some children also may have been harmed or treated unfairly by someone they care about. When discussing such situations, underline that loving that person or group does not mean accepting their actions. In fact, loving them means holding them accountable for their actions. Your children may want to know what to do when faced with a bully or other difficult member of their own peer group. What does loving your enemy mean in a situation like this?

Together brainstorm positive ways to mediate conflict.

O God, show me how to love my enemies that I might be a credible witness to your amazing grace. Amen.



Supplies

Music & Melodies

bit.ly/GGGMusicMelodies

Stories, Colors & More (SCM) i-iv, 13, 16

basic supplies
(see p. vii)

internet-connected
device

blanket or mats

snack (optional)

Guided Play

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

choice 2: craft sticks

choice 3: small bell or
chime

Exploring

choice 1: copies of **GN 2**,
foam hearts, heart
stickers, pipe cleaners

choice 2: **GN 3**

choice 4: copies of **GN 4**



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!

For "Guided Play" choice 2, make a craft stick puzzle for each child. Form a square by lining up 8 to 12 craft sticks as shown below in the sidebar. Tape the pieces together on the back side. Using colorful markers, draw a heart large enough to touch each craft stick. Write "Love Others" on or around the heart. Take the tape off the back. Mark each set on the back with a color or number in case the puzzle pieces get mixed up.

"Exploring God's Grace" choice 1 requires 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 Jesus telling people how to live in God's way: loving, giving, and forgiving.

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

- 1. Coloring Time**—Hand out **GN 1** and invite the children to color the picture. Read the words on the page and engage them in conversation about forgiveness. Ask if they can tell you about a time when they were forgiven or they forgave someone.
- 2. Love Others Puzzle**—Set out a craft stick puzzle for each child. Encourage the children to solve the puzzles. Provide rubber bands to keep the puzzle pieces together and invite the children to take them home.
- 3. More Than You Can Hold**—Collect several small items from your room and place them in a box. Challenge the children to pick up more than they can hold, then let the items spill back into the box. While they experiment, have a conversation about what God gives to each of us.

T For children struggling with transitions, set clear expectations and let them know how long activities should take.



Transitioning to Story Time

When you sense the children are ready to move into group time, call them to the story corner, singing “This Is the Day”—SCM 16. Repeat words and phrases as seems appropriate.

Look around You



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

Look around you. What do you see? (*gaze around with hand above eyes*)

We are the church, you and me! (*point to others and yourself*)

Jesus tells us to love one another: (*cross hands over heart and then open arms wide*)

father, mother, sister, brother. (*move hand down four times, as if showing height*)

Jesus tells us to share what we have. (*move right hand and then left hand away from you, as if sharing items*)

Doing this makes God glad. (*use index fingers to draw a big grin on your face*)

Look around you. What do you see? (*gaze around with hand above eyes*)

We are one big family. (*open arms wide*)

Hands Go Up



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

Hands go up. (*raise hands in air*)

Hands go down. (*move hands to sides*)

I can turn myself around. (*turn around in a circle*)

I can stand up

on one shoe. (*stand on one foot*)

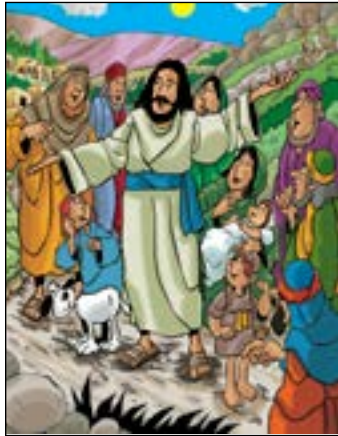
I can listen; (*cup hand by ear*)

so can you. (*point to another*)

I can sit;

I'll show you how. (*sit on floor*)

Bible time is starting now. (*point finger to wrist*)



Hearing the Story

M MS L

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 to live in God's way: loving, giving, and forgiving.

Read **SCM 13**. 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 create movements for the story. One opportunity is with the paragraph that starts "Big (*small*), tall (*short*)," etc. Another opportunity is movements to express the things that Jesus says God wants us to do, versus those things that people say we ought to do. For example, "People may say to hate people who are different than you, but God says to love everyone!" Ask the children to come up with movements for how we can love everyone.

EXPLORING GOD'S GRACE



1. Love Everyone Headband

TD FM

Before the session, cut 2" strips lengthwise from large construction paper to make headbands for the children. Cut the strips from GN 2.

Remind the children that Jesus said we should love everyone, even those who are hard to love sometimes. Tell them that they are going to make hats that they can wear to remind others to love everyone too.

Give each child a strip from **GN 2** that says, "Love Everyone!" and invite the children to color the strip. Encourage them to decorate the strip with foam hearts and heart stickers. Show them how to glue their strip to a headband strip. Size the headband strip to their head and tape it accordingly.

Give each child two pipe cleaners and a pencil. Show them how to wrap a pipe cleaner around the pencil and withdraw the pencil to make a pipe cleaner corkscrew. Tape a foam heart on one end of each pipe cleaner. Tape the other end of the pipe cleaners to the top side of the headband.

Encourage the children to wear their headbands around church and at home to remind people that God wants us to love everyone!

TD *Some children struggle with touch and feeling messy. Others may have issues with bands on their head. Give advance warning and provide options such as simply using crayons or markers to draw. Allow the child to wash their hands often if needed and let them opt out of wearing the headband.*



2. Forgiveness Skits C L

Explain to the children that one way we show God's love to everyone is to forgive someone when they have done something that may have hurt our feelings. We also experience God's love when someone forgives us after we have done something wrong. Tell the children that they are going to act out skits showing forgiveness.

Read a scenario on **GN 3** and ask for two volunteers to act out how forgiveness is asked for and how it is given.

After all the scenarios are read and skits are acted out, wonder with the children how it feels to receive forgiveness for something you have done wrong and how it feels to give forgiveness to another person.

3. "Jesus Says" Song L

Remind the children that Jesus tells us how to live in God's way. In that way, they are sharing God's blessings by being a blessing to others. Teach the children the following song to the tune "London Bridge Is Falling Down." Add movement and/or rhythm instruments once the children are familiar with the words.

Jesus says love everyone, everyone, everyone.
Jesus says love everyone; do not hate.

Jesus says we should forgive, should forgive, should forgive.
Jesus says we should forgive, and we'll be forgiven.

Jesus says we all should share, all should share, all should share.
Jesus says we all should share with everyone.

Jesus says God loves us so, loves us so, loves us so.
Jesus says God loves us so; we are God's beloved.

4. Coloring Page FM

Hand out copies of **GN 4** 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, "What is Jesus saying to the people?"
- ▼ I wonder, "What were some things that Jesus did to show he loved and forgave people around him?"
- ▼ I wonder, "How can I be more loving, giving, and forgiving like Jesus?"

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

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.



LOVING AND SERVING GOD

FA

Call the children together, singing the “Jesus Says” song that you used in “Exploring God’s Grace” choice 3. Repeat words and phrases as appropriate.

Ask the children to name examples of how they can treat others as they would like to be treated. Encourage them to follow through with the actions 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.

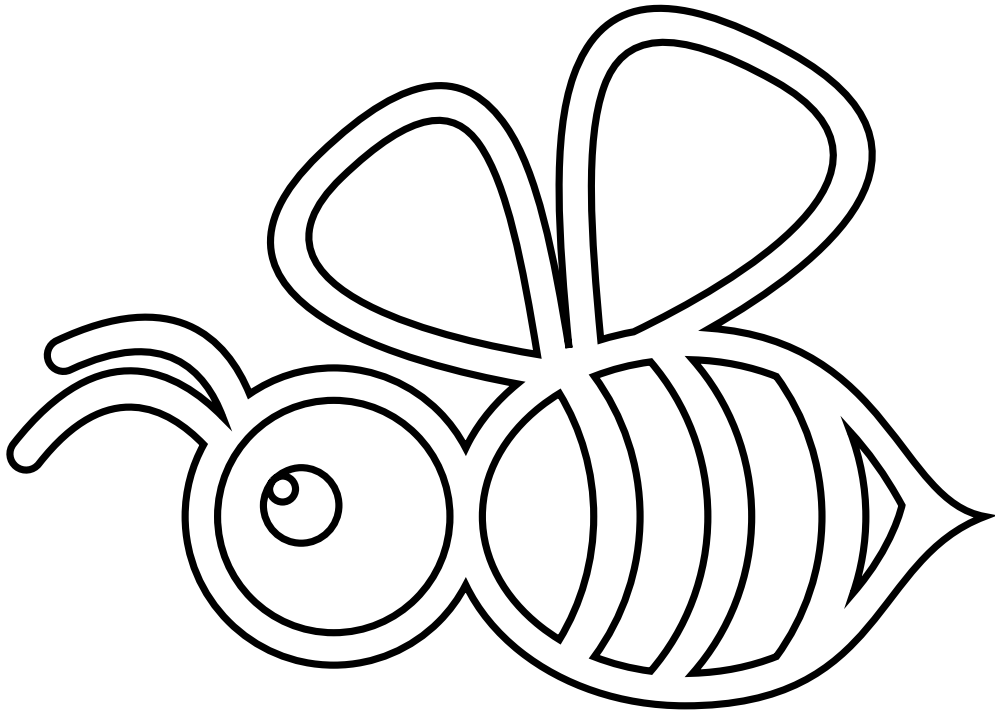
W, X, Y, and Z. Thank you, God, for loving me.

Amen!

As the children leave, bless them: “(Name), love, give, and forgive! 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).



KIND

4

GIVE

 <p>Love Everyone!</p>	
 <p>Love Everyone!</p>	
 <p>Love Everyone!</p>	
 <p>Love Everyone!</p>	
 <p>Love Everyone!</p>	
 <p>Love Everyone!</p>	

Scenario 1:

You are playing on the playground. A ball is thrown and it hits you on the arm.

Who asks for forgiveness and what do they say?

Who forgives and what do they say or do?

Scenario 2:

You are setting the table at home for dinner but you really want to watch TV. So you aren't paying attention and you drop a plate. It breaks. It was one of your mom's favorite plates.

Who asks for forgiveness and what do they say?

Who forgives and what do they say or do?

Scenario 3:

Your dad is doing the laundry and washes your favorite T-shirt. It shrinks and it's too small to wear anymore.

Who asks for forgiveness and what do they say?

Who forgives and what do they say or do?

Scenario 4:

It's past your bedtime and you want to finish your video game. Your grandma says that it's time for bed and you can finish tomorrow. You yell at her and stomp your feet as you head to bed.

Who asks for forgiveness and what do they say?

Who forgives and what do they say or do?

Scenario 5:

Your friend tells your classmates that you are a dodo bird and it hurts your feelings. You get mad and knock down the block tower your friends were building.

Who asks for forgiveness and what do they say?

Who forgives and what do they say or do?

God's Way to Live



Jesus invites people to love, give, and forgive.

