



## Good News!

**Goal: To proclaim God's good news as Jesus did.**

### RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

#### . . . In Luke 4:14-21

When Jesus began the work of his ministry, he came to Nazareth, his hometown. In the synagogue service, he read from the prophet Isaiah: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me. He has sent me to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the prisoners and recovery of sight to the blind, to liberate the oppressed, and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" (vv. 18-19, CEB). Jesus could have stopped there. Nevertheless, he went on to say: "Today, this scripture has been fulfilled just as you heard it" (v. 21, CEB).

Jesus was proclaiming that in his ministry, the promises God made to Isaiah were happening. In who Jesus was and in what he was doing, the ancient assurances of God's coming reign were going to be coming true. Imagine, good news, release, the blind will see, and the oppressed will be free! God's great work is being accomplished through Jesus' work of ministry.

Jesus' work of giving God's grace to others invites us to participate. As Jesus' disciples, we follow God's directions in seeking healing, justice, and peace. In gratitude, we share God's grace and work for God in our own ministries.

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

Children are concrete thinkers—they understand what they see and hear in literal ways. Don't expect them to grasp the nuances of symbolism or motivation in Bible stories. In school, they are developing new listening skills and the ability to stay more focused on what others are saying. When they have "good news," it is likely they will want to tell as many people as possible.

Encourage them to explore the justice themes in today's Bible story. Why does God want us to share what we have? What is "good news to the poor"? Children will have many concrete ideas about how we might transform the world. Share their ideas with others in your congregation.

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

This would be a good time to recall all that your church is doing in response to God's grace: feeding others, seeking healing, working for justice, and being peacemakers. Maybe you are involved in one of those ministries. Consider telling something of the ways you are participating in ministry with others. Invite a teenager or adult to share what their ministry is. We all have ministries of grace that bring good news, release, recovery, and liberation to others. This is a great time to connect children with a ministry of your church in ways that make use of their gifts.

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



## Supplies

### Music & Melodies

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

### Stories, Colors & More (SCM) i–iv, 9, 23, 24

basic supplies  
(see p. vii)

internet-connected  
device

blanket or mats

biblical costumes

snack (optional)

## Guided Play

choice 1: scroll using  
**Grace Notes (GN) 1**,  
Bibles of different types

choice 2: **SCM 9a, 9b**

choice 3: blocks

## Exploring

choice 1: copies of **GN 1**

choice 2: pictures from  
**SCM 9c, 9d**

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 children to remember.

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!

Before the session, make a scroll using **GN 1** for use in “Guided Play” choice 1. See “Exploring God’s Grace” choice 1 for directions. Gather a variety of Bibles.

“Exploring God’s Grace” choice 2 requires more prep.

### Welcoming and Guided Play



Greet the children by name and with the words “Grace and peace to 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 and caregivers who you do not know personally. Explain to them that the children will hear a story about Jesus reading Scripture in his home synagogue at the beginning of his ministry.

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

- 1. Reading Bibles**—Provide the scroll and a variety of Bibles such as a children’s Bible, your personal Bible, a New Testament, and Bibles of different sizes, colors, and bindings. Invite the children to examine the scroll and the Bibles. Listen as they talk about what they see. Wonder with the children how the Bibles teach us about God.
- 2. Growing Up**—Place the cards from **SCM 9a** and **9b** on the table. Invite the children to choose a card showing someone they might want to be when they grow up. Have them take turns acting out the different professions. Wonder with the children what Jesus thought he might be and do when he grew up.
- 3. Building a Church**—Provide blocks. Comment that Jesus always went to the synagogue (like a church building). Even though Jesus’ place of worship was different in some ways, Jesus and the people did many of the same things we do today. Invite the children to work together and to use their imaginations to build a church building.



- L *Children who struggle with attention may have difficulty during story time. To help with focus and comprehension, suggest listening prompts, engage them with movement, or provide a specific item within the story picture to find.*

## Transitioning to Story Time

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

### He Grew and Grew



Invite the children to help create motions to the following poem:

Jesus was a baby. But guess what? He grew and grew and grew.  
You were a baby. But guess what? You grew and grew too.

Jesus went to the river; John baptized him there.  
You *are/can be* baptized too.

Jesus heard God say, “You are my beloved child.”  
You belong to God too.

Jesus did what God asked him to do.  
You do what God asks you to do too!

### Hands Up

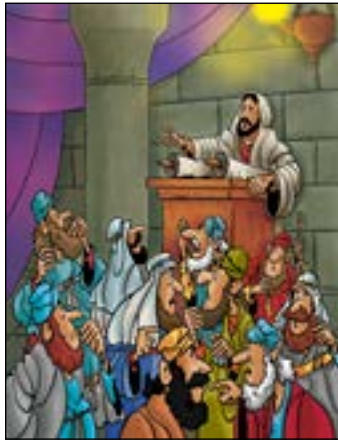


Sing the following verses to the tune of “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star.” Encourage the children to do the motions with you:

Raise hands up, and (*raise hands up*)  
put them down. (*put hands down*)  
I can wiggle all around. (*wiggle around*)

Jesus told of (*point to the right, to the center*)  
God’s good news. (*point to the left*)  
I can listen, (*cup hands to your ears*)  
you can too. (*point to several others*)

I can sit. I’ll show you how. (*sit*)  
Story time is starting now.



## Hearing the Story

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Explain that when Jesus was baptized, he understood that he belonged to and was loved by God. He also understood that God wanted him to preach and do good things for all people.

Open the Bible to Luke 4 and point out that the story comes from the Bible. Invite the children to look at the Bible scroll you made using **GN 1** and talk about what they see. Encourage the children to listen to the Bible story to find out what Jesus was reading and what surprising news he gave about what he read.

Read **SCM 9**. Express the emotions of the story in your voice, gestures, and facial expressions. Conclude the story by prompting the children to say, “Amen.”

After reading the story, invite the children to act it out. Provide costumes. Ask the children to take turns dressing up as Jesus and “reading” the scroll. Other children can dress up as worshipers at the synagogue and the leader at the synagogue who handed Jesus the scroll of Isaiah.

Remember that the children probably cannot read the scroll so encourage them to repeat the words after you.

As the children take turns role playing, comment: “Jesus said that he had good news to share. I wonder what good news we can share about Jesus.”

You might respond: “Jesus wanted all the people to know that he loved God. He was always working for God and wanted to show God’s love to others.”

## EXPLORING GOD’S GRACE

### Pictures on the scroll:

- spirit
- preach
- people
- poor
- people
- sad
- people
- blind
- tell
- prisoners
- free

### 1. Making Good News Scrolls

A TD FM

*Before the session, make copies of **GN 1** for each child and cut the rectangle.*

Help the children make a scroll with verses from the Bible. Make available copies of the verses from **GN 1**, craft sticks, and tape or glue. Help the children tape or glue the short sides of the rectangle to craft sticks. Show the children how to roll the scrolls around the craft sticks starting from both sides, rolling half way in on each side. Write the children’s name on their scrolls. Show them how to roll their scrolls. Tie the scrolls with pieces of yarn.

Read the verses on the scroll. Mention that Jesus said that he would bring good news to people. Ask the children to whom they would like to show their scrolls. Wonder to whom they could tell the good news about Jesus.



To make the cube sturdier, glue **SCM 9c** and **SCM 9d** to cardstock before forming the cube.

If learning the entire verse is too ambitious for your group, concentrate on the words *love, God, heart, being, and strength*. As you say the verse, the children can show the motions.

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.

## 2. Helper Cube

Before the session, adhere **SCM 9c** and **9d** to construction paper before cutting. Cut both along the solid lines and fold along the dotted lines. Tape tab “A” behind the lower portion of the die. Fold along each of the dotted lines and fold. Tape the tabs to the inside of the die. The last tab is tricky—gently push the tape through then squeeze the sides in.

Review the story. Remind the children that Jesus brought good news to all people, including those who are poor, sad, and unhappy. Jesus came to help, and we can help too.

To play the game, invite a child to toss the cube on the floor and tell how a person in the picture facing up is being kind or helpful. The child then tosses the cube to another child who continues the game. You can also ask for volunteers to pose like the pictures and invite them to play out what happens and what the people say to each other.

As the children act out the various pictures, wonder how God shows love for us. Wonder how we can show love to other people.

## 3. Loving God

Tell the children that Jesus learned Scripture as a child. Remind them that they heard Jesus repeating a verse in his synagogue in today’s story. The good news found in those verses was very important to him.

Practice saying Deuteronomy 6:5 (CEB): “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your being, and all your strength” as they did in the previous session. Invite the children to do the motions that they created for the verse or create new motions this week. Use the motions until the children are able to say the whole verse.

Remind the children to help their families learn the verse and to repeat it from memory every day.

## 4. Coloring Page



Hand out copies of **GN 2** and crayons. Invite the children to color the picture. Engage the children in conversation by using the following questions:

- ▼ I wonder, “What might Jesus have wanted to be when he grew up?”
- ▼ I wonder, “How did Jesus feel standing in front of all his neighbors reading the Scripture?”
- ▼ I wonder, “What did Jesus think he would be doing after he read the Scripture?”

**T** Consider how much time your planned activities will take and adjust transition times according to the remaining time available.



## LOVING AND SERVING GOD

Encourage each child to put away one toy or object. Invite the children to sit around a table or on the floor.

Sing the first stanza of “I’m Gonna Live So God Can Use Me”—**SCM 24**—while you serve the snack.

Say the following litany and ask the children to respond with “Thank you, God”:

Thank you, God, for Jesus. (*Thank you, God.*)

Thank you, God, for helping us know God’s Word. (*Thank you, God.*)

Thank you, God, for calling us to love you. (*Thank you, God.*)


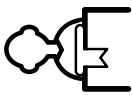

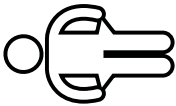

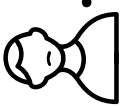

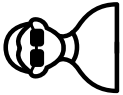

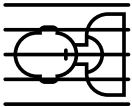

Help us to share your love with others. (*Thank you, God.*)

Amen.

As the children leave, bless each one: “(Name), share the good news with others. 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).


**The** of the Lord God is on me.  
**God sent me to**  **good news to**  **who are**  **.**  
**God sent me to help**  **who are**  **.**  
**God sent me to help**  **who are**  **so they can see.**  
**God sent me to**  **the captives and**  **they have**  
**been set**  **.**

—based on Isaiah 61:1-2





# Good News!



God sent Jesus to preach good news.

