



Let Us Worship

Goal: To worship with praise, thanksgiving, and prayer.

RECOGNIZING GOD’S GRACE . . .

. . . In Psalm 122

The Psalms are the faith community’s conversations with God. Psalm 122 expresses the joy of traveling to and arriving at God’s temple in Jerusalem for worship. This was probably a psalm sung by people on a pilgrimage to the temple. It would have served a similar function to that of a processional hymn in our worship today. The temple was the symbolic place of God’s presence; similarly, Christians refer to their churches as “the house of God.” This does not mean that God is not present elsewhere, but does suggest that a particular place has a sense of holiness about it.

Verse 6 says, “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.” “Peace,” *shalom*, is already in the root of the name “Jerusalem.” The pilgrims come to Jerusalem to pray for judgment (Hebrew *mishpat* is when the neediest, the marginalized, those nobody else cares for, are cared for) and to give thanks (something tangible, something precious you offered to God, to demonstrate your immense gratitude to God, and your intense trust that your future was in God’s hands). We give thanks in worship and take it with us when we go back home.

. . . In Your Children’s Experiences

How do the children in your group participate in congregational worship? There are many simple ways to include them, such as inviting older children to read Scripture (be sensitive to those who may have literacy concerns), establishing child and youth choirs, and using songs and hymns that are appealing to young people. Children can be encouraged to play simple rhythm instruments during hymn singing times. Many older children and youth play instruments and can be invited to accompany the choir. Follow up on ways that you can advocate for and affirm the participation of children within congregational worship.

. . . In Your Relationships with the Children

Reflect on the ways in which you worship with the children during your sessions together. Do you set aside a corner of the room for worship time? Are children given opportunities to create their own prayers? How are the experiences of children from diverse cultural backgrounds reflected in your worship? Stories, art, and music often provide opportunities for discussion about who God is, and how God calls us to live. Make a list of ways that you can strengthen and affirm the participation of children in worship during your sessions, and follow through on them.

Praise be to you, O God.

Thank you for the opportunity to learn alongside these children. Amen.



Supplies

Music & Melodies

bit.ly/GGGMusicMelodies

Stories, Colors & More (SCM) i–iv, 10, 17

basic supplies
(see p. vii)

internet-connected
device

blanket or mats

snack

Guided Play

choice 1: green cloth,
blocks

choice 2: small hand
mirrors; cards from
SCM 10a, 10b, and 10c

choice 3: dress-up
clothes

Exploring

choice 1: Bible costumes,
crown

choice 2: choir member
or several youth
(optional)

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 who have 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!

Before the session, cut apart cards on **SCM 10a, 10b, and 10c**.

Gather dress-up clothes: dresses, jackets, vests, scarves, ties, necklaces, hats, purses, bracelets, watches, and so forth.

“Exploring God’s Grace” choice 1 requires more prep.

Welcoming and Guided Play

SD **C**

Greet 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 whom you do not know personally. Tell the parents that today’s story is about a song King David wrote about how exciting it was to see people coming to worship. Invite the children to choose a guided play activity to start:

- 1. Blocks**—Place a small table covered with green cloth in the block center. Invite children to build a city on a hill. Encourage the children to think about what types of buildings would be in a city. How would people get up the hill? Who lives in the city?
- 2. Feelings Faces**—Display cards from **SCM 10a, 10b, and 10c** on a table or wall. Place a basket of small hand mirrors nearby. Encourage the children to look at the cards and identify the feelings represented. Invite them to use the mirrors to look at themselves as they copy different feelings faces. Children may take turns making the face depicted on a card for another child to guess.
- 3. Dress Up**—Provide a variety of dress-up clothes for children to put on. Engage children in conversations about where they go when they dress up, and how they feel when they dress up and get ready to go somewhere.

SD *Sensory issues may affect one sense—hearing, touch, or taste—or may affect a number of senses. For some children, common sounds may be painful or overwhelming. Help these children feel more comfortable by providing advance warning, allowing them time to process the stimuli.*



Transitioning to Story Time

When you sense the children are ready to move into group time, call them to the story corner, playing “Kum Ba Yah (Come by Here).”

In God’s House

MS T

Invite the children to repeat each line after you and follow your motions:

I am looking for God. (*cup hands around eyes*) /
I am following God. (*walk in place*) /
I am praising God. (*raise arms in the air*) /
I am thanking God. (*touch fingers to lips and then move hand up and away from face*) /
I am praying to God. (*place palms together in prayer*) /
I am loving God. (*cross hands over chest*) /

The King and Queen Speak

MS T

Call the children to the story corner by using the following directions:

The Queen says, “Clap your hands.”
The King says, “March in place.”
The Queen says, “Turn in a circle.”
The King says, “Take giant steps to the story corner.”
The Queen says, “Sit down and fold your hands in your lap.”
The King says, “Listen to the story.”

T Use transition cues to give plenty of warning that a change is coming. Clear, tangible signals that are obvious help alleviate tensions. Consider using countdown numbers on a whiteboard before moving to the next activity.



Hearing the Story

L C

Open the Bible to Psalm 122 so that the children know the story comes from the Bible. Tell the children that they are going to hear a story about a song King David wrote about how exciting it was to see people coming to worship.

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.”

After the story, tell the children that David felt *delight*, which is joy and happiness, whenever he heard someone say, “Let us go to the house of the Lord.” Ask the children to show you what they look like



when they are delighted, joyful, and happy. Encourage them to show joy in their facial expressions (smiling and laughing) and with their bodies (clapping hands, leaping, dancing, waving arms). Tell the children that you are going to say different things we do in worship. When they hear you say, “Let us go to God’s house,” they should jump up and show how they look when they feel delighted, then sit back down.

Say: It’s time to praise God! Let us go to God’s house!
It’s time to tell God thank you! Let us go to God’s house!
It’s time to pray for our neighbors! Let us go to God’s house!
It’s time to sing praises to God! Let us go to God’s house!
I am glad when they say, “Let us go to God’s house!”

EXPLORING GOD’S GRACE



1. Act Out the Story

F A

Provide Bible costumes to act out the story. Narrate the story, and have children act out the parts. Start with David as a shepherd in the field tending sheep, pretending to look up the hill to Jerusalem. Give David a crown, and have him pretend to lead the people down a hill, through a valley, and up the hill to Jerusalem. Have David lead the others in acting out praise, thanksgiving, and prayer. Read aloud David’s song from the story. Allow children to switch parts and act out again.

F *Sometimes children protest that they’re being treated unfairly when it may be only that they’re not getting what they want. When self-interest overrides attempts to be fair, ask them to flip the situation and look at it from the other person’s perspective.*

Consider inviting a member of the church choir to share a song with the children and share what it means to them to be a part of leadership in the church. You may also ask youth to share songs that they have learned at church camps or retreats.

2. Praising God through Song

L B

Invite the children to sing songs of praise with you. Pick simple songs that are easy for the children to follow along. Provide rhythm instruments if the songs are familiar.

After singing two or three songs, talk to the children about singing as a way to praise God. Point out that, in the story, David says that he wrote a song about being glad when he hears people say, “Let us go to the house of the Lord.” Ask them to show you what their face looks like when they are glad. Explain that, in worship, we sing songs and listen to others sing songs as ways to show our love for God. We can use songs as a way to pray and say thank you to God for all God has done for us.



3. Prayer Poster

C L LD FM

Tell children that when we talk to God it's called *praying*. We pray to thank God, to ask God for help, and to praise God. We can pray by ourselves, with our families, and with our church family. We can pray out loud, and we can pray silently. We can pray anywhere and anytime. Worship is a time that we pray together.

Explain to the children that they will make a prayer poster to help remember the ways we pray together in worship. Place a large piece of mural paper in the middle of the group of children. Have children work together to trace one of their hands on to the paper. Provide crayons, markers, or colored pencils, and ask the children to decorate their handprints. As they are working, talk about the words we use to talk to God and who and what we pray for. Use the following prompts:

- ▼ What words do we call God? (Lord, Almighty, Loving Creator, and so forth)
- ▼ We are sorry for . . .
- ▼ Thank you for . . .
- ▼ Please help . . .
- ▼ Help me . . .
- ▼ I promise to . . .

As children respond, write their words around the poster, in between the handprints. After you have completed the poster, hang it in a place where it can be referred to for prayers in your classroom.

Use “wonder” questions that do not force a child to remember facts. Wondering 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 1** and crayons. Invite the children to color the picture of David and the people gathering for worship. Engage the children in conversation as they color, using the following wondering questions:

- ▼ I wonder, “Where were the people going to worship God?”
- ▼ I wonder, “What did the people do in worship?”
- ▼ I wonder, “What do we do in worship to praise God?”



LOVING AND SERVING GOD

Have the children help clean up the space.

Call the children together, singing “God Is So Good”—**SCM 17**.

Repeat words and phrases as seems appropriate. Encourage the children to use the rhythm instruments to play along.

Remind the children that God is happy when we worship. Ask them ways they can worship God with praise, thanksgiving, and prayer.

Call the children to snack time. Invite the children to repeat each line of the following prayer:

Food to eat. /
Food to share. /
Thank you, God, /
for all your care. /
Amen. /

As the children leave, bless them: “(Name), sing praises to God.
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).

Let Us Worship



**Let us go to God's house and worship God with
praise, thanksgiving, and prayer.**

