



God Makes a Way

Goal: To trust that God is faithful and will always guide and lead us.

RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

. . . In Exodus 13:17-22; 14:1-22

The people of Israel were on a journey. They had left Egypt and were now going to the land God promised. They were moving from where they were to where God wanted them to be.

But how could they know which way to go? Before roadmaps or GPS, how would they know what direction to take?

God provided a way. The people followed “a pillar of cloud by day, to lead them along the way” and “a pillar of fire by night, to give them light, so that they might travel by day and by night” (13:21). God was leading the journeying people.

When the people were pursued by Pharaoh's army and came to the Red Sea, God provided a way for the people to cross. A strong wind divided the waters so the people could cross on dry ground (14:21, 22). So the people were safe.

Our lives of faith are a journey. We follow God's way of love. We are moving from where we are to where God wants us to be. Along our way, God's loving grace provides the help we need to guide and protect us. We follow in our journey, with gratitude.

. . . In Your Children's Experiences

Pillars of clouds and fire to guide the way are vivid symbols of God's presence with the people, guiding their journey. Children may know and have experience with taking a family trip, and most are familiar with how to get around with a GPS in the car or on a phone. Flashlights on phones and in the hand help brighten a dark path. Children also understand about traveling together and trusting that someone knows the way and will get there safely. Older children will be able to grasp the concept of a lifetime and the ways that God is present with us throughout our lives.

. . . In Your Relationships with the Children

“Traveling mercies” is a kind of blessing people say when someone is leaving on a trip. So are “be safe,” “take care,” or “come home soon.” As you prepare to teach this group, be attentive to their questions, the things in the story about which they are curious. Older children will be able to understand how their lives are moving forward and how God is a part of that journey in faith with them. Younger children will be able to name specific ways the people were able to follow God and connect that with some of their own experiences of going on a trip.

Guide me, O God, in the ways of grace and peace. Amen.



Supplies

Music & Melodies

bit.ly/GGGMusicMelodies

Stories, Colors & More (SCM) i–iv, 2, 14

basic supplies
(see p. vii)

internet-connected
device

blanket or mats

snack

cardboard, rulers or
paint sticks

red, orange, and yellow
tissue paper

Guided Play

choice 1: copies of **Grace Notes (GN) 1** and **GN 2**,
blue plastic tablecloth

Exploring

choice 1: two 13" x 9"
baking pans; nonmenthol
shaving cream; blue
liquid food coloring;
stir sticks, one for
each child; permanent
marker; newspapers or
plastic tablecloth; paper
towels

choice 2: copies of
GN 3, compass or
compass app on a
smartphone, brass
fasteners

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.

Post **SCM i–ii**, “Your Visual Schedule.” Cut out and glue the arrow marker onto a clothespin. Use the 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 two pieces of cardboard into large cloud shapes, about 9" x 12", with one more vertical and one more horizontal. Tape a ruler or paint stick to the cardboard, which will be the handle for carrying the pillar of fire and the pillar of cloud. Cut 1"–2" squares of red, yellow, and orange tissue paper.

“Exploring God’s Grace” choice 1 and choice 2 require more prep.

Welcoming and Guided Play

TD **B** **M** **FM**

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. Explain to them that the children will hear a story about God leading the Hebrew people through the sea.

Invite the children to choose a guided-play activity to start. Make the items in each activity as they will be used in “Hearing the Story.”

1. Making a Sea—Invite the children to make a sea filled with fish. Have them color and cut out fish from **GN 1** or **GN 2** and tape them to a blue plastic tablecloth. Set aside for “Hearing the Story.”

2. Making a Pillar of Fire—Invite the children to make a pillar of fire. Have them slightly crumble the red, orange, and yellow tissue-paper squares and glue them all over the vertical cardboard cloud, first on one side, then on the other. Set aside for “Hearing the Story.”

3. Making a Pillar of Cloud—Invite the children to make a pillar of cloud. Have them glue cotton balls all over the horizontal cardboard cloud, first on one side, then on the other. Set aside for “Hearing the Story.”

T Give the children a signal when it’s time for something new; sing a familiar song or repeat a phrase such as: “One, two, something new.” This may be difficult for some children.

Transitioning to Story Time

When you sense the children are ready to move into group time, call them to the story corner, singing “To the Promised Land”—**SCM 14**. Repeat words and phrases as seems appropriate.

Moses Was a Baby

To help children continue to understand that Moses the baby grew into a man, say the following poem as the children repeat each line after you:

Moses was a baby, /
Moses grew and grew. /
He became a man /
and helped God’s people too. /

Play a Walking Game

MS

Explain that Moses and his people must have had to walk through sand and over rocks and through deep grass to get to their new land.

Ask children to select places in the room where they can move without bumping into anyone. Suggest that they pretend to walk through the following: sand, water, big rocks, tiny pebbles, deep grass, honey, popcorn, shaving cream, play dough, mashed potatoes.

Invite children to suggest other possibilities. Then try crawling or swimming through each of the substances.

Hearing the Story

L C

Gather the pillar of fire, pillar of cloud, and sea the children made in “Welcoming and Guided Play.” Place the sea to one side of the space. Have a pair of scissors nearby. Invite the children to share what they remember about the story of baby Moses. Allow a short time for answers, then briefly review the baby Moses story before continuing. Recall that Moses grew up and became a leader of his people. Tell the children that this story is about Moses leading the people out of Egypt.

Open the Bible to Exodus 13 so the children know the story comes from the Bible. Read **SCM 2**. Express the emotions of the story in your voice, gestures, and facial expressions. Conclude the story by prompting the children to say, “Amen.”

Hand out the pillars of fire and cloud to two volunteers. Have the children place them on the floor until they are called for in the story. Tell the children to follow your actions as you read the story again.

Invite the children to help you say a thank-you prayer. You can start a prayer by saying:

Thank you, God, for taking care of Moses and his people.
Thank you, God, for taking care of me.



Today’s story can be found in *Growing in God’s Love: A Story Bible*, edited by Elizabeth F. Caldwell and Carol A. Wehrheim (Louisville, KY: Flyaway Books, 2018), www.pcusastore.com.



Thank you, God, for caring for . . . (Ask children to say their names when you point to them; say children's names if they are shy.)
Amen.

EXPLORING GOD'S GRACE



If you choose this activity, you may want to pair it with "Exploring God's Grace" choice 4 and have the children color while they take turns with the shaving cream pictures.

1. Through the Water

TD FA B

Before the session, cover a table with newspaper or a plastic tablecloth.

Gather one or two children at a time to make swirling water paper. Allow each child to work with his or her own pan. Fill 9" x 13" baking pans with nonmenthol shaving cream. Show the children how to squeeze two or three drops of blue food coloring over the white shaving cream. Give each child a stir stick and have him or her run it through the drops of shaving cream. Tell the children to pretend that they are making waves and swirls in a sea.

Once a child has finished making swirls with the shaving cream, write the child's name in permanent marker on the back of a sheet of 8½" x 11" card-stock paper. Help the child lay the paper over the shaving cream. Lightly press down on the paper and let it sit there for a moment. Lift the paper straight up and put it shaving-cream side up on a covered surface. Use a paper towel to scrape the shaving cream off the paper and into a sink or trash bag until the paper is cleared. You will see a swirled pattern on the paper. It will already be dry.

Clean out the pan(s) and begin again with another child.

After everyone has made a sea picture, have the children look at the papers and pretend they are with Moses at the edge of the Red Sea. Invite them to use their imaginations as you say:

The water is swirling and splashing. The Egyptians are close behind. God tells Moses to go through the water. Moses knows God is faithful and will guide the people. Moses raises his staff and God separates the water. Moses and God's people go through to the other side.

Ask the children what they would say or do when they reached the other side of the sea.



2. God Will Guide Us

C L FM

Before the session, obtain a compass. Some brands of smartphones have a compass installed, while other brands may require you to download a free app.

Ask the children how God guided the Hebrew people. Remind them, if necessary, that God guided them with a pillar of fire they could see at night and a pillar of cloud they could see during the



day. Wonder together how God might guide people today. Consider how easy it is for us to follow a map on our smartphones that tells us where to go. Suggest that another way people find their way is with a compass. Show the children a compass or the compass app on your smartphone. Ask them what they think a compass is used for. Explain that it can help someone find their way. Suggest that God’s pillars of fire and cloud were like a compass for the Hebrew people.

Tell the children they will make a pretend compass to remind them that they can look to God to guide them. Give each child a copy of **GN 3** and a paper plate. Instruct the children to add the directions to their compass by writing an N, for North, in the top space and an S, for South, in the space at the bottom. Have them hold up their right hands and then write an E, for East, in the space on the side of their right hand. Do the same for writing a W, for West, by their left hand. Have them color the compass and then cut it out and glue it to the back of their paper plate. Help the children cut out the compass pointer and attach it to the compass with a brass fastener. Read the words on the compass, encouraging the children to remember that God will guide them.

3. God Will Be with Me

SD

Give the children rhythm instruments and invite them to sing and play instruments to “To the Promised Land”—**SCM 14**. Then ask the children where are places they may go that God will be with them. Sing the tune “To the Promised Land” with new words, such as: I’m on my way to play with friends, play with friends, play with friends, God will be with me.

- ✎ I’m on my way to go to school. . .
- ✎ I’m on my way to my house. . .
- ✎ I’m on my way to the playground. . .

SD *Some children with sensory issues have difficulties with loud sounds. Sounds from rhythm instruments may be painful or overwhelming. Help these children feel more comfortable by providing advance warning.*

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 FM

Hand out copies of **GN 4** and crayons. Invite the children to color the picture. Engage the children in conversation as they color, using the following wondering questions:

- ✎ I wonder, “What did the people see in the water as they walked by?”
- ✎ I wonder, “What feelings did the people have as they walked on the dry land through the sea?”
- ✎ I wonder, “What was Moses thinking as he led the people?”



LOVING AND SERVING GOD



Call the children to snack time, singing “To the Promised Land”—**SCM 14**. Repeat words and phrases as seems appropriate.

Have each child put away one toy or object. Invite everyone to sit around a table or on the floor to enjoy a snack.

Encourage the children to remember that God is with them, leading them, every time they see a cloud in the sky and every time they see a flame.

Go around the circle, asking each child to name one thing for which she or he is thankful. End with a simple prayer, such as:

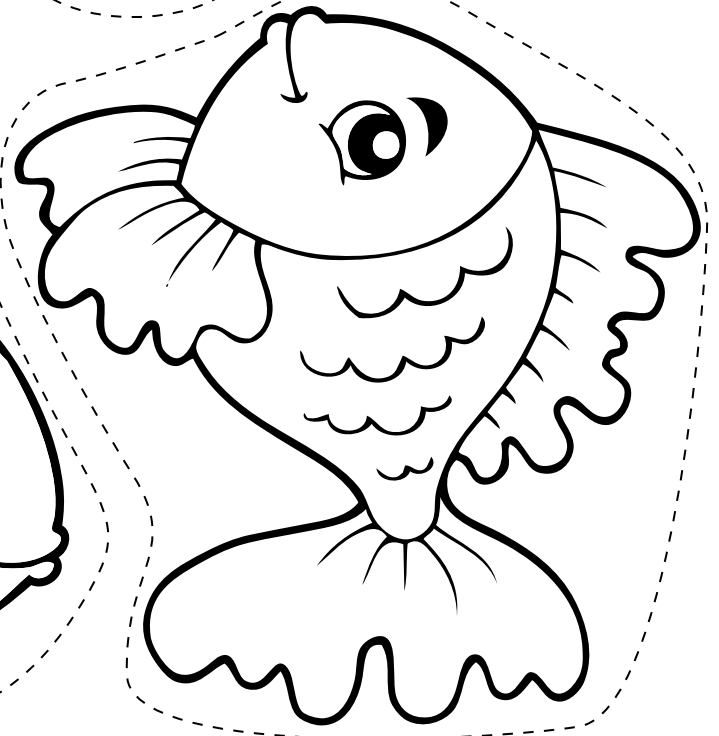
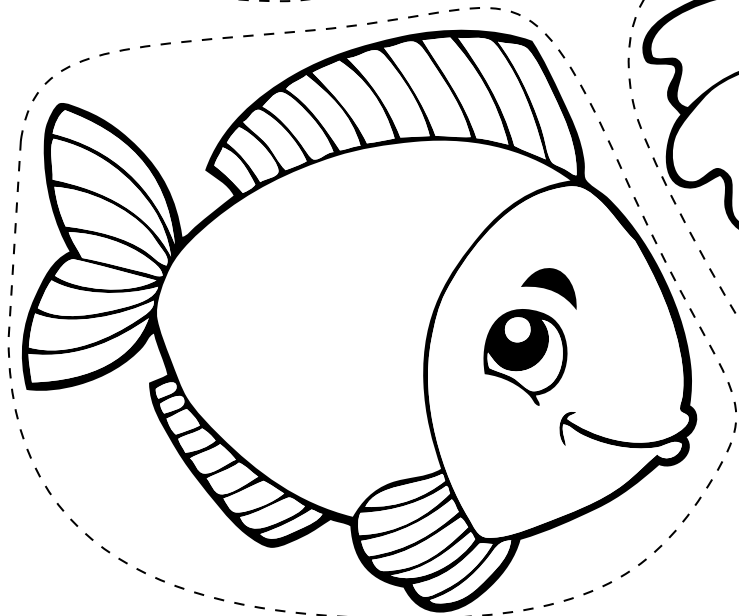
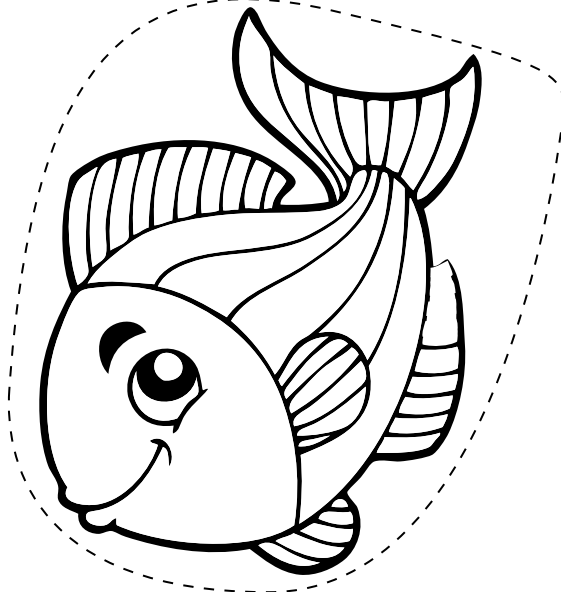
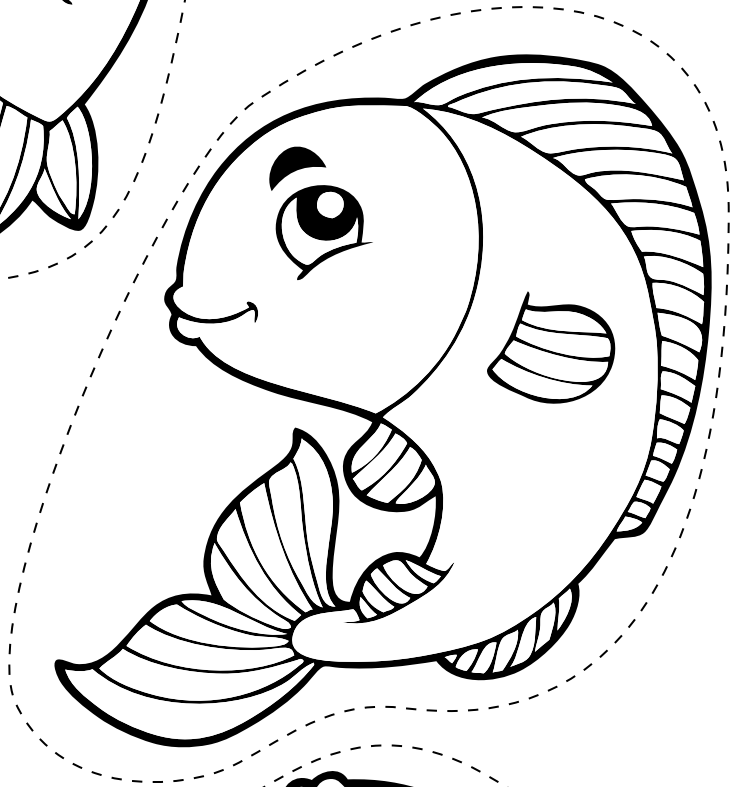
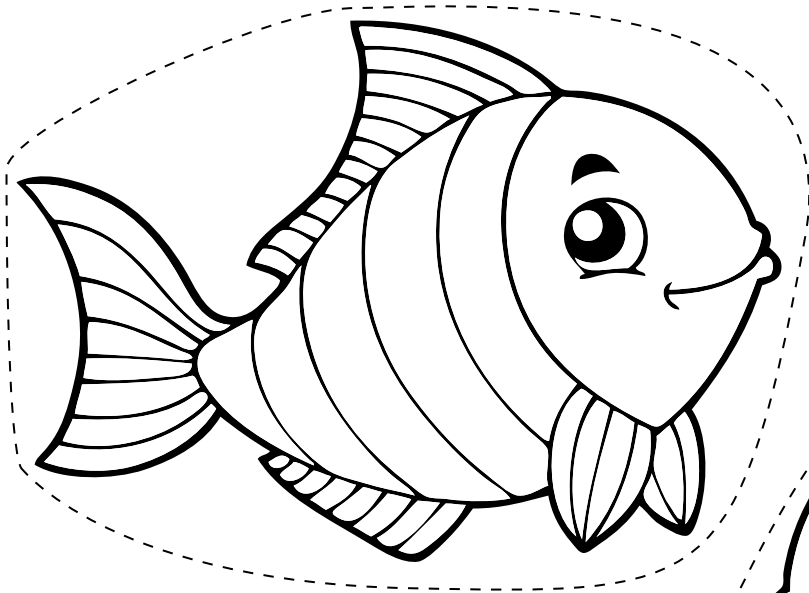
God, thank you for never leaving us alone. Even when we are scared and frightened, you help us and guide us. Amen.

Explain that the Hebrew people needed to love and support one another to take off on such a long, hard journey. Ask the children to identify ways we show support and encouragement to one another (hugging, giving high fives, helping one another), and to find ways to do these things this week. As the children feel comfortable, invite them to share hugs, high fives, or handshakes with one another.

Bless each child, saying, “(Name), God loves you. Go in God’s grace.”



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).







God Makes a Way



God parts the sea so Moses can lead the people to safety.

