



The People Care for God's Word

Goal: To treasure God's Word.

RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

. . . In Exodus 25:10–22; 37:1–9

God's people in the wilderness received God's law in the Ten Commandments. On their journey, they needed to carry with them the two stone tablets with the commandments written on them. An Ark of the Covenant was constructed. It was a wooden box into which the commandments were placed.

The Ark of the Covenant was always in the midst of the people as they moved along. It meant that God's word to the people was there in the community of faith, as a reminder of God's presence and God's will for the people.

Today, God's word is still present in the community of the church. We have God's Word in the Scriptures. The Bible conveys God's will for our lives as disciples of Jesus Christ. The Scriptures show us the way God wants us to live in relation to God and to other people. The Scriptures tell the whole story of God's love for humankind, beginning with the Old Testament and the story of creation in Genesis, continuing in the New Testament with the stories of Jesus and the beginnings of the church.

The psalmist said, "I treasure your word in my heart, so that I may not sin against you" (Psalm 119:11). We, too, can treasure God's Word and share it with others.

. . . In Your Children's Experiences

Perhaps you remember having something very special as a child, a box where you put treasures you collected or a comforting object like a bear or blanket that was always there. Children will be able to tell you about special things they have and why they are important. Many children also have the experience of traveling and deciding what one or two special things they want to take with them. A visit to the sanctuary will provide children with the opportunity to name the special things there that help everyone remember God and God's love for them. These experiences provide a bridge for the children to understand this story of how God wanted the Israelites to remember the Ten Commandments wherever they traveled on their journeys.

. . . In Your Relationships with the Children

Have Bibles with you so the children can locate the Ten Commandments. Children who read will be able to locate the passage themselves. As you talk about how reading the Bible helps us learn about how God wants us to live, you could talk with them about their favorite Bible stories or Bible storybooks. It would be interesting to see how many have access to Bibles and reading at home. It would also be interesting to ask them to share their answers to this: We care for God's Word when . . .

*O God, help me treasure your Word in my heart
that the children may come to treasure it too. Amen.*



Supplies

Music & Melodies

bit.ly/GGGMusicMelodies

Stories, Colors & More (SCM) i–iv, 3, 14, 16

basic supplies
(see p. vii)

internet-connected
device

blanket or mats

snack

Guided Play

choice 1: objects to
count (ten of each item),
pipe cleaners, beads

choice 2: copies of
Grace Notes (GN) 1

choice 3: **SCM 3a**,
newspapers, large box
with lid such as copy
paper box, two 24"
wooden dowels, gold or
yellow paint, gold glitter
(optional)

Exploring

choice 1: Ten
Commandment pictures
from “Guided Play”
choice 2

choice 3: copies of **GN 2**;
craft supplies such as:
glitter glue, sequins,
stickers, foam shapes,
decorative tape, paint
markers, and foil

choice 4: copies of
GN 3

Save the Ark of the
Covenant for the Summer
5 session.

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 the winged creatures from **SCM 3a** and fold along the dotted lines to form a tent for use in “Guided Play” choice 3.

“Exploring God’s Grace” choice 3 requires more prep.

Welcoming and Guided Play



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 that the children will hear a story about the Israelites building the Ark of the Covenant.

Invite the children to look at the guided-play activities and pick one to start:

- 1. Counting**—Set up counting stations, such as: ten craft sticks numbered one to ten, ten different-colored stones or flat pebbles, ten blocks for the children to build a tower. You could also provide pipe cleaners and beads and invite the children to thread ten beads on the pipe cleaners to make a bracelet.
- 2. Coloring**—Provide copies of **GN 1** and crayons. Help the children read the words and count the numbers on each of the tablets. Save papers for “Exploring God’s Grace” choice 1.
- 3. Making an Ark**—Cover the work area with newspaper. Put paint smocks on the children. Let the children paint the box gold or yellow. When the paint is dry, help them tape the cut-out winged creatures from **SCM 3a** to the top of the box. Tape the wooden dowels to the sides of the box, making sure the ends extend evenly past the ends of the box. (These will be the carrying poles.) Let them glue glitter on the box, if you choose. Place the finished ark in the story area. Set aside for “Hearing the Story.”

T *Transition times vary, so plan accordingly. Cleanup may only require a short warning while handwashing may require more warning and time. Use a song or short activity to signal the change.*



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.

Celebrate Joy B

Have the children stand in pairs, facing each other. Tell the older child in each pair to stay as serious as possible during the game. Tell the younger child in each pair that she or he is going to make the silliest faces, movements, and noises possible. The goal is to make the older child laugh. Switch roles.

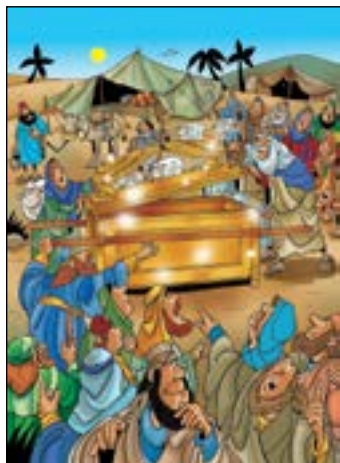
Sing God's Good Rules (Action Song) L

Sing to the tune of “Row, Row, Row Your Boat,” inviting the children to follow your actions.

(Sing) Up, up, up the hill, (*walk fingers up one arm*)
Moses heard God's call. (*put hands to mouth, as if calling*)
Down, down, down he came (*walk fingers down one arm*)
with God's rules for all. (*hold hands, palms up*)

(Say) How many rules did God give? (*count fingers*)
1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10! Ten!

(Sing) Ten, ten, ten good rules (*hold up all ten fingers*)
to follow in God's way. (*walk fingers away from you*)
We will love God and our friends, (*point up and then to friends*)
love them every day. (*hug yourself*)



Hearing the Story L C

Tell the children that God gave the people some special words on stone tablets. The words helped the people know how to live God's way. Ask the children what some of these special words, or commandments, might be. Wonder together how God's people took care of the special words.

Explain that God's people were on a long, long trip. They took care of the special stone tablets. They built a box called the Ark of the Covenant in which to keep the stone tablets. Place the ark the children made in “Welcoming and Guided Play” in the midst of the children.

Open the Bible to Exodus 25 so the children know the story comes from the Bible. Read **SCM 3**. Express the emotions of the story in



your voice, gestures, and facial expressions. Conclude the story by prompting the children to say, “Amen.”

Wonder together:

- ▼ Where do we find God’s words today? (*the Bible*)
- ▼ What are ways that we can take care of God’s Word?
- ▼ How can we share God’s Word with others?

EXPLORING GOD’S GRACE

1. Placing God’s Special Words in the Ark



Mention that the ark they made is a little bit like the Ark of the Covenant that they heard about in the story. Ask the children what the people in the story put in their ark. Wonder together if we have special words from God to put in our ark.

Children may respond with sentences such as, “Love God with all your heart.” Place the stone tablets colored in “Guided Play” choice 2 in the box.

If children don’t mention the Bible, comment that the Bible has the same special words from God that they heard about in the story and that it has more special words. God’s special words help us to know how to live God’s way. Connecting with the story, place the Bible in the ark.

Read the story again. Take the ark in procession around your meeting area. Four children at a time may take turns carrying the ark with everyone else following behind them. As you go, sing “To the Promised Land”—**SCM 14**—and shout words of thanksgiving to God. At the end of the parade, put the children’s Ark of the Covenant in a special place in your meeting space.

2. Play Stop and Go



Place a masking-tape line on the floor. Have all the children stand side by side behind the line. Walk several paces away from the line. Explain to the children that, when you say something that God wants us to do, they will begin to move slowly toward you. When you say something that God doesn’t want us to do, they will stop and not move toward you. If they don’t stop, they go back to the masking-tape line and start again.

Use “Stop and Go Commandments” (sidebar) to play the game. If a child has to go back to the masking-tape line to start again, explain that sometimes we make mistakes, but God forgives us, and we can start over again. When a child reaches you, have him or her take a bow while everyone cheers. Invite the child to either play again or sit next to you and help cheer on the rest of the players.

Stop and Go Commandments

Stop (God doesn’t want us to . . .)

Love other things more
than we love God.
Be mean to our mom and
dad or people who care
for us.
Hurt people.
Break promises.
Take things that don’t
belong to us.
Tell lies.
Want what our neighbor
has.

Go (God wants us to . . .)

Love God.
Love our mom and dad or
people who care for us.
Care for people.
Keep promises.
Share things.
Tell the truth.
Be happy with what we
have.



3. Treasuring God's Word



Before the session, cut apart copies of GN 2 so that each child has a strip with two tablets.

Make a box to treasure God's words. Let the children choose a small box to decorate as they wish. Explain that this box will hold a special treasure. When they have finished decorating, hand out strips from GN 2. Ask the children what the pictures are on the paper. Remind them that the Hebrew people put the Ten Commandments in the Ark of the Covenant because they treasured God's words to them. Read the words on the two tablets and tell the children that "Love God" and "Love Others" reminds us of what God's words in the Ten Commandments say. We are to love God and love others! Invite the children to cut out the two tablets and place them in their treasure box. Gather the children and pray:

Dear God, thank you for the words that you gave your people long ago and that are still true for us today: Love God and love others. May we treasure these words always. Amen.

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



Hand out copies of GN 3 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 it feel like to carry the Ark of the Covenant?"
- ▼ I wonder, "What might the man in the front be saying about the Ark of the Covenant?"
- ▼ I wonder, "How long did it take to make and decorate the Ark of the Covenant?"

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.*



Save the Ark of the Covenant for the Summer 5 session.



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).

LOVING AND SERVING GOD



Call the children to snack time, singing “Hallelujah! Praise Ye the Lord!”—**SCM 16**. 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.

Invite the children to repeat each line of the prayer after you:

Food to eat, /
food to share. /
We thank you, God, /
for all your care. /
Amen. /

Enjoy the snack.

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

Thank you, God, for your word. Thank you for your love.
Thank you for people who love you and take care of your church. Help us to love you and share your grace with others.
Amen.

As the children feel comfortable, invite them to share hugs, high fives, or handshakes with one another. Send each child with a blessing, such as: “(Name), may the grace of God go with you.”

5 6 7 8 9 10

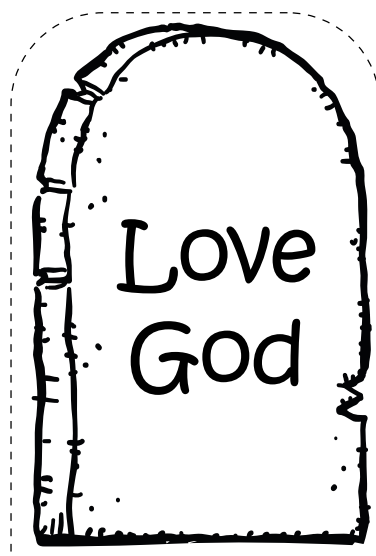
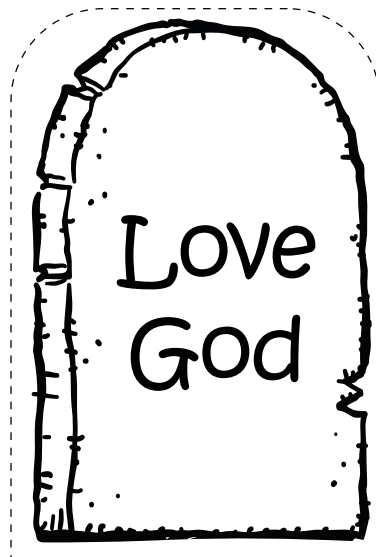
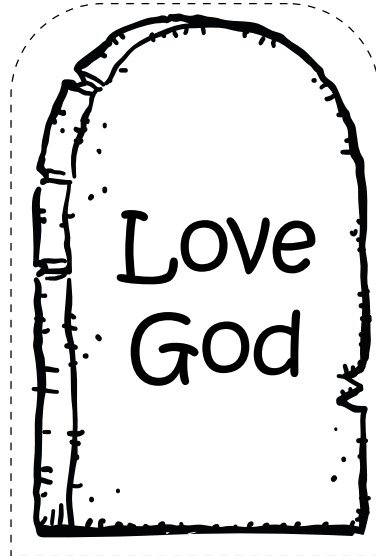
Love

Others

1 2 3 4

Love

God



The People Care for God's Word



The people build a special box for God's special words.

