



# God Calls a Shepherd Boy

**Goal:** To celebrate that God knows us inside and out.

## RECOGNIZING GOD’S GRACE . . .

### . . . In 1 Samuel 16:1–13

Samuel’s role as God’s prophet led to his finding a shepherd boy, David, to be anointed and become Israel’s greatest king.

When God rejected Saul, Israel’s first king, God instructed Samuel to visit Jesse of Bethlehem, for “I’ve chosen one of his sons to be my king” (16:1). Initially, Samuel thought the tall and handsome son of Jesse, Eliab, would be God’s choice. But God said, “No.” For “people judge others by what they look like, but I judge people by what is in their hearts” (v. 7). Eventually, Jesse’s seven sons appeared before Samuel, but none were God’s choice. When Samuel inquired if Jesse had another son, he was told the youngest son, David, was out taking care of the sheep.

As soon as David appeared, the LORD told Samuel, “He’s the one! Get up and pour the olive oil on his head” (v. 12). David was to become king and “the Spirit of the LORD took control of David and stayed with him from then on” (v. 13).

God guided Samuel to the person God wanted to be king. David was not the most obvious choice. But he was God’s choice. God’s grace guided; and the nation would be grateful.

### . . . In Your Children’s Experiences

Making choices, being chosen—these are experiences that children have. Wise school teachers make sure each child has a chance to be a leader. The story of God choosing David to be the leader of God’s people provides a great way to think about the ways that God wants us all to live with one another. Children quickly learn about difference and evaluating people by how they dress or speak, or how they look. This session is a reminder that what matters are the things that can’t be seen; what is inside our hearts is what’s important for children of all ages to remember.

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

Inviting children to tell stories about a time when they have been a leader and what they did is a great way into this story of David. Naming characteristics of leaders would be a good activity for older children who are able to name people they know in their church, community, and country. Children quickly pick up on what the culture values in a leader. The story of David invites them to consider a very important quality in a leader. The thing that God wants is a faithful heart, a person who is wise, is caring, and loves others. As you send them on their way at the end of the session, invite them to add their response to this sentence: “You are a leader when . . .” As they leave, bless them with the sign of the cross on their forehead or on their hand, anointing them for their work as one of God’s leaders.

*Holy God, open my eyes to the gifts you have given each child in my group. Remind me that you have given me gifts too. Amen.*

## Supplies

### Music & Melodies

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

### Stories, Colors & More (SCM) i–iv, 7, 18, 22

basic supplies  
(see p. vii)

internet-connected  
device

blanket or mats

snack

## Guided Play

choice 1: dress-up  
clothes

choice 2: large piece  
of green felt, blocks,  
toy fences and trees  
(optional)

choice 3: copies of  
**Grace Notes (GN) 1**,  
heart stickers, safety  
pins

## Exploring

choice 1: copies of **GN 2**

choice 2: copies of  
**GN 3** and **GN 4**

choice 3: **SCM 7a, 7b**

choice 4: copies of **GN 5**

## 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!

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

### Welcoming and Guided Play

**TD** **B** **M** **MS** **F** **FM** **SD**

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 you do not know personally. Tell them today’s story is about David, the shepherd boy, whom God chooses to be a leader. Invite the children to choose a guided-play activity to start:

- 1. Dress-Up Clothes**—Invite the children to play with dress-up clothes. As they put on costumes, comment, “(Name), you are dressed as \_\_\_\_\_, but I also know that it is (Name) under those clothes!” Comment on something you know about that child. You are recognizing each child for who they are, not what they are putting on. Comment that God saw David’s true self even though he was a shepherd boy.
- 2. Being a Shepherd**—Spread a large piece of green felt on the floor or a table. Place some blocks, toy fences, trees (if available), and cotton balls on the felt. Invite the children to be a shepherd and make a field for their sheep (the cotton balls) by using the blocks and other items. Encourage them to move their sheep around. Every so often, you could pick up some sheep and move them from one place to another and tell the children that their sheep have gotten out of their field and need rescuing.
- 3. God Sees My Heart**—Hand out copies of **GN 1** and invite the children to color the heart. Read what is written in the heart to each child, “God sees \_\_\_\_\_’s heart!” Invite the children to write their name in the blank, or write it for them. Invite the children to decorate their hearts with heart stickers. When the children have finished, cut out each heart and pin it on the child. Say to each child, “God sees (Name)’s heart!”



**T** *Transitions can be difficult for children. Do not force reluctant children to join a group activity. Instead, allow them to observe quietly from their own play area or to listen to a story read to them by an adult helper until they are ready to join the group.*

## Transitioning to Story Time

When you sense the children are ready to move into group time, call them to the story corner, singing “Thank You, God, for Loving Me”—**SCM 22**. Repeat words and phrases as seems appropriate.

### God Sees Me

**L M**

Sing or say the words to the song “Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes,” and do the corresponding actions while pointing to each body part. For the line “God sees me, and I’m a child of God,” raise your hands for “God sees me” and hug yourself for “and I’m a child of God.” Invite the children to join your words and motions.

Head and shoulders, knees and toes,  
knees and toes.  
Head and shoulders, knees and toes,  
knees and toes.  
God sees me, and I’m a child of God.  
Head and shoulders, knees and toes.

Eyes and ears and mouth and nose,  
mouth and nose.  
Eyes and ears and mouth and nose,  
mouth and nose.  
God sees me, and I’m a child of God.  
Eyes and ears and mouth and nose.

### Calling the Sheep

**L M MS**

Tell the children that you are the shepherd and they are the sheep. Instruct them to wander quietly around the room as sheep would do. Tell them that when they hear their name called, they are to come to the story corner, which is your sheep paddock. Quietly call each child by name, calling them to come to the sheep paddock. When each child arrives, pat them on the head and say, “Good sheep!”



Today's story can be found in *Growing in God's Love: A Story Bible*, edited by Elizabeth F. Caldwell and Carol A. Flyaway Books, 2018), [www.pcusastore.com](http://www.pcusastore.com).

## Hearing the Story

L MS

Open the Bible to 1 Samuel 16 so the children know the story comes from the Bible. Tell the children that they are going to hear a story about David, a shepherd boy, whom God chooses to be a leader.

Read **SCM 7**. Express the emotions of the story in your voice, gestures, and facial expressions. Conclude the story by prompting the children to say, "Amen." Read the story again and invite the children to stand and do the following motions each time they hear the following words:

- ▼ **Samuel**—one hand over eyes looking around
- ▼ **King**—put hands on head like a crown
- ▼ **Strong**—make strong arms
- ▼ **No**—shake head "No"
- ▼ **David and heart**—put hands over heart

## EXPLORING GOD'S GRACE

### 1. Protecting the Sheep

TD

Hand out copies of **GN 2** and a cotton ball to each child. Tell the children that they are going to pretend to be shepherds protecting their sheep like David did. Tell them that the cotton ball represents the sheep. They need to move the cotton ball through the maze avoiding the wolf, bear, and lion. Wonder together why God chose David, a shepherd, to take care of God's people.

**TD** *For children who have tactile sensitivities, stimulations that most people do not particularly notice, or at least are not bothered by, could cause extreme reactions that may be interpreted as bad behaviors. Allow these children to avoid activities involving tactile items such as cotton balls, sand, and finger paint, or provide a substitute material.*

### 2. David Is Chosen

FM

Remind the children that Samuel looked at David's seven brothers and knew they weren't the ones God had told him to choose as a leader. When Samuel saw David, he knew he was the leader God wanted, because God saw David's good and kind heart. Hand out copies of **GN 3** and **4** and invite the children to color the two sheets of paper, one with eight brothers and one with Samuel, God's messenger, on the right, and Jesse, the brothers' father, on the left.

When the children are finished coloring, invite them to draw a heart on the youngest brother, David, to show David's heart. Cut two slits where indicated in each child's paper of Samuel and Jesse. Cut out the strips of the brothers along the indicated lines and tape them together. Help the children insert the strips with the brothers into the slits of the other paper, pulling the brothers across the page, one at a



time. As each brother passes, ask, “Is this the one God has chosen?” Encourage the children to respond, “No!” When you get to David, ask the question and encourage the children to say, “Yes!” Remind them that David is chosen to be the king because of his good and kind heart.



### 3. Matching Sheep

LD VI

*Before the session, cover the backs of **SCM 7a** and **SCM 7b** with construction paper. Cut the cards apart.*

Invite the children to play a matching game with the sheep. Show them all the sheep and how they match up. Then mix the cards up and turn the cards facedown on a table. Have the children take turns trying to find the matching sheep. Talk about how shepherds learn to recognize their sheep, and that God recognizes each of us too, inside and out.

### 4. Coloring Page

Hand out copies of **GN 5** and crayons. Invite the children to color the picture of David, the shepherd boy. Engage the children in conversation as they color, using the following wondering questions:

- ▼ I wonder, “What did David do all day as a shepherd?”
- ▼ I wonder, “How did David feel when Samuel said God had chosen David to be king?”

**T** *Transitions can be difficult. This may be a good time for some quick physical activities, such as touching toes, reaching high, turning in a circle, and so forth.*

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.

## LOVING AND SERVING GOD

LG FA

Call the children together, singing “We Are Blessed to Be a Blessing”—**SCM 18**. Repeat words and phrases as seems appropriate. Remind the children that God sees their good and kind hearts. Ask them how they will be kind today.

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

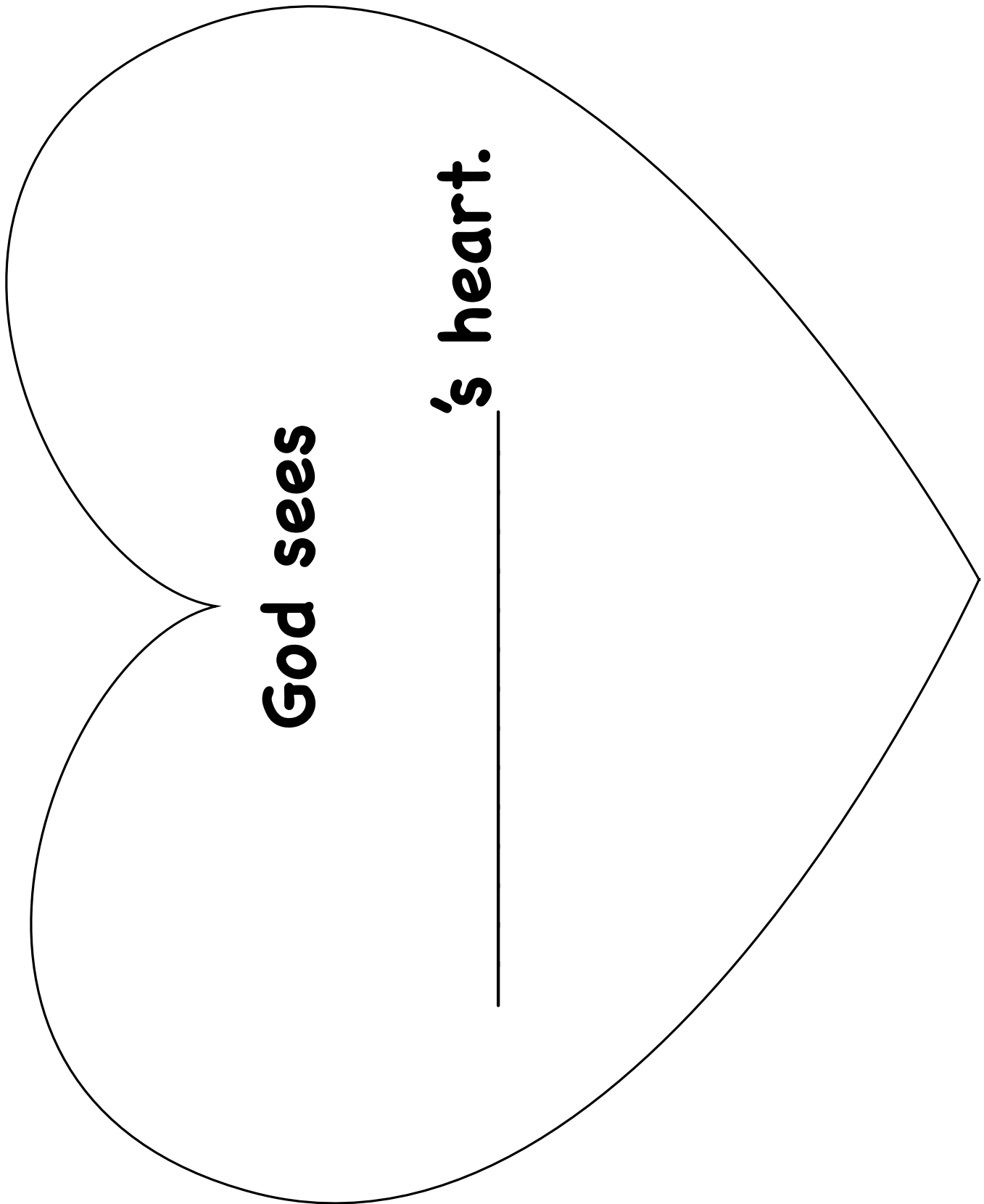
Bless the food before us, /  
the friends beside us, /  
and the love between us. /  
Amen. /

As the children leave, make the sign of the cross on their forehead or hand, and bless them: “(Name), listen! God knows you and loves you. The grace of God is with you.”



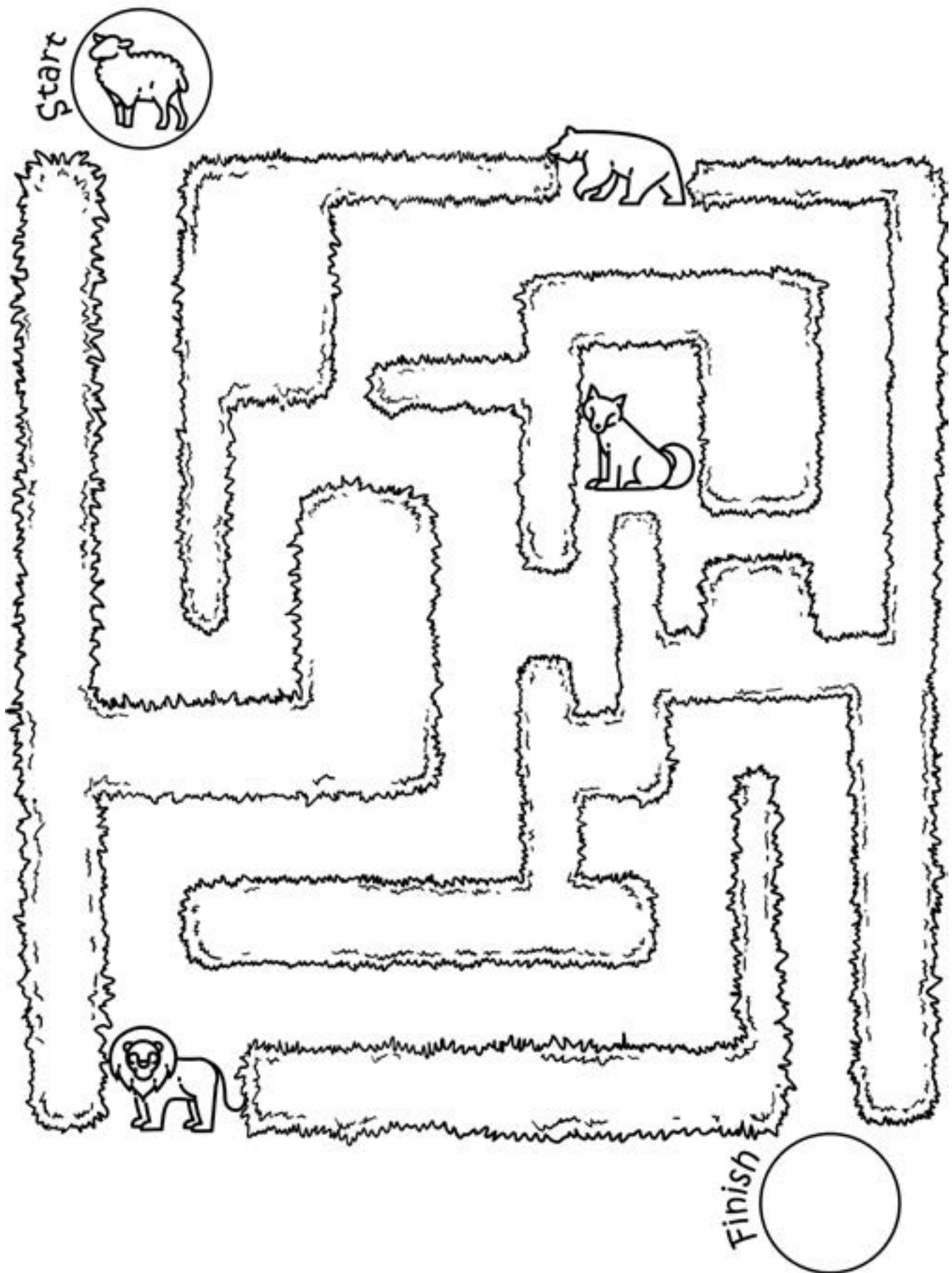
Ask parents and caregivers for their email addresses so that you can provide them with the link to [www.pcusastore.com/GGGdownloads](http://www.pcusastore.com/GGGdownloads), where they can download coloring pages, *Grace Sightings*, audio stories, and songs (see p. vii).







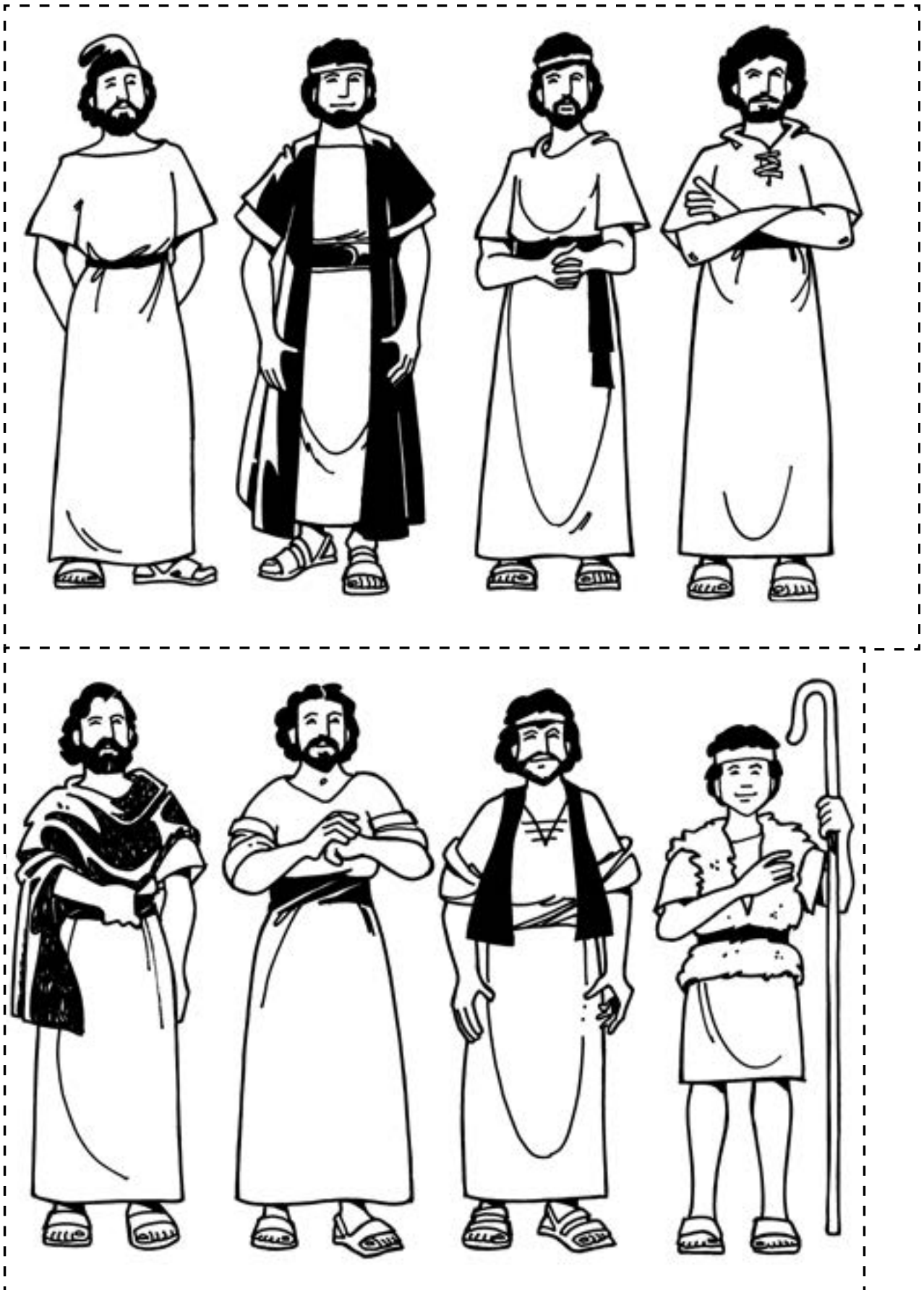














## God Calls a Shepherd Boy



God selected David to be a king, because he had a good and kind heart.

