



# God Cares for All

**Goal:** To trust in God’s abounding care for us.

## RECOGNIZING GOD’S GRACE . . .

### . . . In Matthew 6:25–33

The Greek word for “worry” (vv. 25, 27, 31) means “to be preoccupied with,” such as with food and appearance. Birds are an example of a proper attitude toward food (v. 26): they work hard to find it, but they do not store it for future shortages. If God cares for such birds, how much more will God provide for, feed, and clothe those who are faithful to him? So do not be preoccupied with your physical needs (v. 31).

Not worrying about life does not mean that we don’t work or that we can’t own property. It certainly doesn’t mean that we should not plan for the future, but that planning takes place while being aware of God’s providence—and God’s kingdom. Seeking God’s kingdom “first” (v. 33) is a matter of remembering that, every day, in every action, God’s kingdom is our priority.

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

Many children seem to live in the present, without an ounce of concern about the future. They know that, if Mom and Dad have the means, they will take care of the necessary stuff (like food and clothes and a place to live), so they don’t have to worry about physical needs. However, children worry about being liked and/or accepted. They worry about being laughed at, about being different, and about a variety of day-to-day concerns. The good news is that eventually they will outgrow most of these worries. The bad news is that, for the present and foreseeable future, these worries are at the heart of their world.

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

Be aware of children and families in your church who don’t have the means to meet basic necessities. In such circumstances, telling the children not to worry because God understands their needs seems unhelpful. It might be better to say, for example, “Jesus’ words inspire me to show my gratitude to God by taking care of people who need food and clothes.” Then, offer the example of generosity in Christ’s name as one way to put the kingdom of God first in our lives.

*Gracious God, thank you for caring for us even when we worry.  
Amen.*



## Supplies

### Music & Melodies

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

### Stories, Colors & More (SCM) i–iv, 11, 19, 20

basic supplies  
(see p. vii)

internet-connected  
device

blanket or mats

bubble solution and  
wand

snack

## Guided Play

choice 1: stuffed  
animals, pet toys,  
leashes, small brushes,  
bowls

choice 2: pictures of  
single flowers, bottoms  
of paper cups, play  
dough

choice 3: water table or  
large plastic tub, water,  
cups and bowls, river  
rocks

## Exploring

choice 1: copies of **Grace Notes (GN) 1**, paper  
straws

choice 2: pipe cleaners,  
o-shaped cereal

choice 3: large bag

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 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!

For “Guided Play” choice 2, gather pictures of single flowers from magazines or print flowers from the internet. Cut paper drinking cups to be about an inch tall.

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

### Welcoming and Guided Play

Welcome the children by name as they arrive, and say, “You are God’s beloved child.” Prompt the response, “Amen” or “Thanks be to God.” Be sensitive to any children who might be visiting for the first time. Explain to the parents/caregivers that the children will hear a story about Jesus teaching his friends and followers not to worry.

Invite the children to choose a guided-play activity:

1. **Animal Hospital**—Provide a variety of stuffed animals, bowls, small brushes, pet toys, and leashes. Invite children to take care of the animals. Encourage them to feed, play with, brush, walk, and pet the animals.
2. **Field of Flowers**—Provide pictures of single flowers. Invite children to cut out flowers. Assist with cutting as needed. Have the children glue the flowers to the tops of craft sticks. Show them how to place a small mound of play dough in the bottom of a paper cup and poke the bottom of the craft sticks into the play dough to make a small field of flowers.
3. **Waterfall Play**—Fill a water table or a shallow tub with warm water. Provide an assortment of cups, bowls, and smooth river rocks. Encourage children to play with the water, stacking the rocks and pouring water over them to make a waterfall effect.

**T** Giving young children a gentle warning that you will be shifting focus soon can help them mentally prepare for the change. Alerting them calmly makes changes feel like less of an emergency.



## Transitioning to Story Time

When the children are ready to move into group time, call them to the story corner, singing “Hello, Hello! How Are You?”—**SCM 19**. Repeat words and phrases as appropriate.

### Look around You

MS L

Invite the children to follow your motions as you lead this action poem.

Look around you. (*gaze around with hand above eyes*)  
What do you see? (*place index fingers at outside corners of eyes*)  
The whole wide world, (*circle arms overhead and to your sides*)  
and you and me! (*point to others and yourself*)

God made the flowers (*raise hands in front, wiggling fingers*)  
and God made the birds. (*flap arms like a bird*)  
God cares for all! (*point to others and yourself*)  
Haven’t you heard? (*cup hand around ear*)

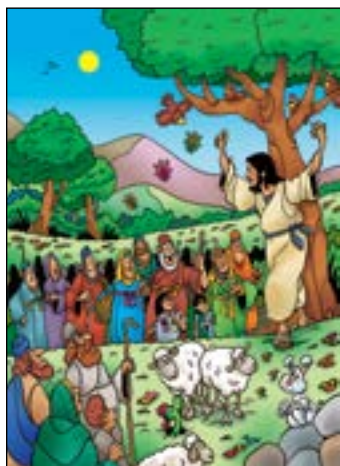
Look around you. (*gaze around with hand above eyes*)  
What do you see? (*place index fingers at outside corners of eyes*)  
The whole wide world, (*circle arms overhead and to your sides*)  
and you and me! (*point to others and yourself*)

### We Are God’s Family

MS L

Invite the children to repeat your words and actions.

You and you and you and you (*point to those in the circle*) /  
are part of God’s big family. (*hug yourself*) /  
I stretch my arms to hold you all, (*stretch arms around each child on each side*) /  
a great big circle we will be. (*all hold hands together*) /  
God’s arms reach around the world (*stretch arms out wide*) /  
and hold each child in loving care. (*hug yourself*) /  
For God gives us all we need each day (*pat yourself on the head*) /  
and God loves it when we share. (*hug yourself and then stretch arms out wide*) /



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](http://www.pcusastore.com).

## Hearing the Story

L VI

Open a Bible to Matthew 6, so that the children know the story comes from the Bible. Comment that we read the Bible to hear stories about all of God's people. Explain that today's story is about Jesus teaching his friends and followers not to worry.

Read **SCM 11**. Express the emotions of the story in your voice, gestures, and facial expressions. Conclude the story by prompting the children to say, "Amen."

After you read the story, tell the children that Jesus tells us not to worry because God will take care of us. Remind them in the story that, when Jesus said, "Don't worry"; the people said, "But . . .," "What do I . . .," "How will we . . . ?" Take out a bottle of bubbles and blow a bubble or two and say, "But . . ." then pop the bubble. Tell them that you worried about what to wear today and blow a bubble, continue to talk about worrying about how you would look, would everyone think you looked nice, would you be warm enough . . . until the bubble pops. Tell the children that our worries are like the bubbles . . . they disappear. Explain that God's care for us is always there. Take a moment to let children tell you their worries and then pop bubbles that you blow for them.

## EXPLORING GOD'S GRACE



### 1. Don't Worry Necklaces

FM

*Before the session, cut card-stock copies of **GN 1** in half. Cut a 24-inch length of string for each child. Cut paper straws into 1" pieces.*

Give children a half-sheet of **GN 1**. Read what is written on the petals and flower center, and invite the children to color the petals and flower center. Assist children in cutting out flower parts. Demonstrate how to glue the edge of petals to the back of the circle to make a flower. Give each child a string and several straw pieces. Have them string the straw pieces on the string. Use a piece of clear tape to attach the flower to the middle straw piece. Tie the strings at the ends to make a necklace.

Encourage the children to wear the flower necklace to remember that God loves them and others. Because of that love, we don't have to worry. God takes care of us.



## 2. Don't Worry Bird Feeders

FA FM LG A

Tell the children they will make bird feeders to help care for the birds during the winter time. Give each child a pipe cleaner, and show them how to make a hook at the end of the stem so cereal will not fall off. Have the children string cereal onto the stem until it is full. Demonstrate how to bend the cereal stem into a shape. Try circles, hearts, triangles, or free-form shapes. Children can make several bird feeder shapes and hook them together or take some with them to hang at home. Hang feeders outside the church to help feed the birds.

## 3. Don't Let Your Worry Weigh You Down

MS C L VI

*Before the session, gather items from around the room such as blocks, bean bags, books, and so forth that will add weight to a bag.*

Show the children an empty bag. Pass it around and let them feel the weight of it. Ask the children about some worries they or others might have. Write the worries on a sheet of newsprint.

After the list is complete, direct the children's attention to a pile of items you have placed across the room. Tell the children that, as you read a worry from the list, they will take turns walking across the room to the pile and placing an item in the bag and then come back to the group.

After each child has had a chance to place an item in the bag, talk with them about how heavy all that worry is to carry around. Let each child try to carry the full bag. Then have the children carry the bag with a partner and see if it's easier to carry. Have the whole class lift the bag and see if it is easier when everyone helps.

Tell the children that we can remember to talk to God and to reach out to people God has put in our lives to help us not worry. As you empty the items out of the bag, say a prayer together, giving each "worry" to God.

## 4. Coloring Page

C FM

Hand out copies of **GN 2** and crayons. Invite the children to color the picture of Jesus teaching his friends and followers. Engage the children in conversation as they color by using the following wondering questions.

- ▼ I wonder, "How many people were there?"
- ▼ I wonder, "Where did the people come from?"
- ▼ I wonder, "What is Jesus telling the people?"

**T** *Don't ignore what happens in between activities. Even if it is just moving from centers to story time, the abruptness can cause problems for some children. Give the time a focus by engaging the children in a simple activity. Marching from one place to another, lining up by height, or clapping hands can give focus to the task.*

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

FA

Call the children to snack time, singing “Thank You, God, for Loving Me”—**SCM 20**. Repeat words and phrases as appropriate.

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

Sit in a comfortable position and tell the children to find a comfortable listening position. Breathe deeply and sit up so everyone can see every other face. Say: “When we pray, we tell God about what makes us happy and what makes us sad.”

Mention something that makes you happy and something that makes you sad (perhaps a recent event in your community or the world). Ask the children what things make them happy or sad. After your conversation, pray together.

To conclude the prayer, you might say:

Thank you, God, for hearing all our prayers. Thank you for caring for us when we are happy and when we are sad. May we care for others as you care for us, so their worries may be like bubbles and float away. Amen.

Enjoy a snack. As the children leave, bless each one: “(Name), you are a beloved child of God. Find ways to share God’s love 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).

**DON'T  
WORRY!**

**GOD  
LOVES  
YOU!**

**GOD  
LOVES  
ME!**

**GOD  
LOVES  
YOU!**

**GOD  
LOVES  
ME!**

**GOD  
LOVES  
YOU!**

**GOD  
LOVES  
ME!**

**DON'T  
WORRY!**

**GOD  
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**GOD  
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YOU!**

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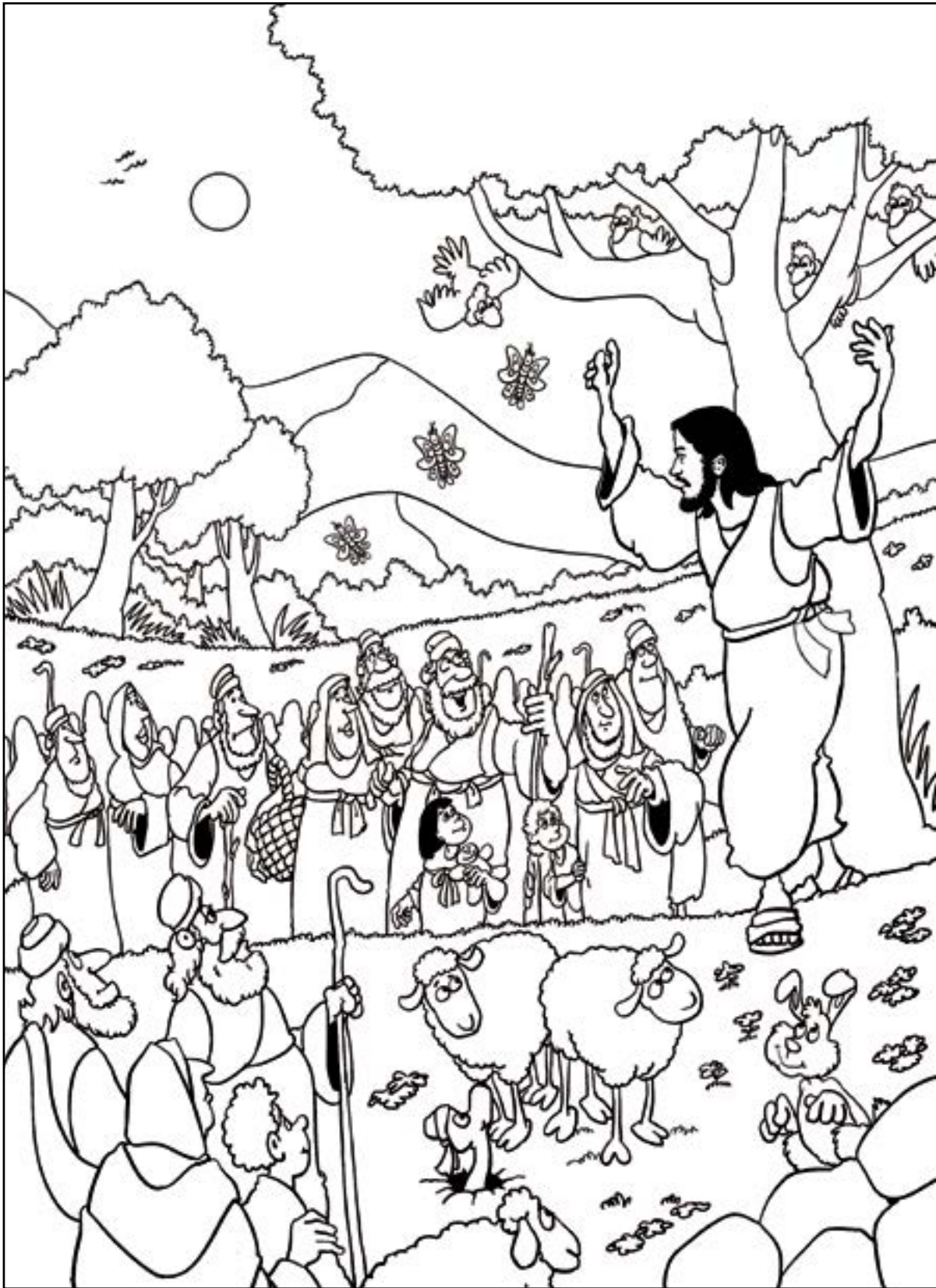
**GOD  
LOVES  
YOU!**

**GOD  
LOVES  
ME!**





# God Cares for All



Jesus tells the people that God cares for them.

