



God Calls Jeremiah

Goal: To wonder how God might be calling us.

RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

. . . In Jeremiah 1:4-10

Jeremiah endured suffering as God's prophet. What sustained him? His call from God. He recognized he was being set apart to serve God. In his account here, we see several stages.

First, Jeremiah recognized God's commissioning. God said, "Before I created you in the womb I knew you; before you were born I set you apart; I made you a prophet to the nations" (1:5, CEB). God chose Jeremiah, even before his birth, to carry out God's work. This is the deepest sense of purpose imaginable. But then Jeremiah objected. He said he didn't know how to speak because he was only a child (v. 6, CEB).

Yet God reassured Jeremiah. God said not to be afraid and that wherever he went, "I'm with you to rescue you" (v. 8, CEB). This was a divine reassurance that no matter how bad things got, Jeremiah could depend on the presence and protection of God.

Finally, to make this real, God gave Jeremiah a sign. God "stretched out his hand, touched my mouth, and said to me, 'I'm putting my words in your mouth'" (v. 9, CEB).

God's grace called and protected Jeremiah. He spent his life in gratitude for God's grace and in obedience to God's call.

. . . In Your Children's Experiences

Children probably have many experiences of hearing a parent or other adult call them with a job for them to do. "Hey, I need your help." Children of all ages will be able to tell a story about ways they help out and chores they do. You might ask, "Is there a job you don't think you could do?" or "Are there jobs at home, at school, or in your neighborhood that you don't like to do?" These questions will help make the transition to telling the story of Jeremiah and understanding his response to God's call to him to be a prophet.

. . . In Your Relationships with the Children

As the children arrive, involve them in helping you with something for the session. Let them assist you with getting out supplies for the learning activities or putting out the Bible or candle. As you involve them in getting the room ready, you could talk with them about the ways they help out at home. What are jobs they have to do at home or at school or in their neighborhood?

As you tell the story of Jeremiah and his reluctance to believe he could do what God was asking, remind the children that whenever they have tough jobs to do, God is with them.

Dear God, open my ears to your call and give my feet strength to respond. Amen.



Supplies

Music & Melodies

bit.ly/GGGMusicMelodies

Stories, Colors & More (SCM) i–iv, 11, 23, 24, 26

basic supplies
(see p. vii)

audio stories (optional)
(see p. vii)

internet-connected
device

cloth

candle

building blocks

Responding

Claiming

prepared game box

Extra

copies of **Grace Notes (GN) 1**

GATHERING IN GOD’S GRACE

Post **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.

“Claiming God’s Grace” requires more prep.

Welcoming and Preparing

LG A B M MS

Welcome each child by saying, “Grace and peace be with you, (*Name*).” Prompt the children to respond, “And also with you.” Invite children to place a cloth, candle, and Bible on the worship table.

Ask some children to prepare today’s “Responding in Gratitude” activities. Suggest that one or two lead today’s singing.

Ask two children to make a line on the floor with masking tape. Invite the children to think of things that might be difficult for them to do. Gather at the line. Say that one end means “too young,” the opposite end means “too old,” and the center means “just right.” One at a time, name the items on the list below and invite the children to stand on the line to indicate if they are too young, too old, or just the right age to do it:

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------|
| ✎ Sleep in a crib | ✎ Buy a house |
| ✎ Go to school | ✎ Have friends |
| ✎ Drive a car | ✎ Get married |
| ✎ Read | ✎ Do homework |
| ✎ Eat baby food | ✎ Ride a bike |

Tell the children to keep the question, “Am I old enough?” in mind during today’s story.

Singing

Gather together and play “God Gives Us a Gift (Dios nos da un regalo)”—**SCM 23**—as the children listen. Note that the song is in English and Spanish. Take time to listen and enjoy the words in both languages. Play the song and sing along.

Praying

C

Turn on the candle reminding us of God’s presence. Invite the children to share one glad thing and one sad thing from their week. Prompt the children to respond accordingly to each share with “Praise God!” or “Hear our prayer, gracious God.” Then end by saying:

God of grace, thank you for hearing our prayers. In Jesus’ name. Amen.



Preparing to Hear the Story C

Ask the children to describe what a prophet is. Explain that a prophet is a person who speaks God's words to the people of God. Many times, a prophet would tell the people how they were not being faithful to God, what would happen if they continued to be unfaithful, and that they needed to repent (return to God). Invite the children to strike a pose showing how they think a prophet might look.

Tell them that they will hear a story about how a boy named Jeremiah became a prophet. Jeremiah lived about six hundred years before Jesus. Explain that God chose Jeremiah to be a prophet, and Jeremiah thought it was too big a job for someone so young.



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.

Some children will love to knock down blocks. Others might be upset about their blocks being knocked down, but they may enjoy building anew.

Hearing the Story L LG SD

Have many building blocks available, and invite the children to build towers as they hear the story.

Invite a child to open the Bible to Jeremiah. Read **SCM 11** or use the story audio. Conclude by saying, "Word of wisdom, Word of grace," and prompt the children to say, "Thanks be to God."

Tell them that you will read the story again. When they hear God tell Jeremiah that a time would come when the nation would be pulled down and destroyed, they are to knock down the towers they made. Encourage the children to listen as you read the story again.

Explain that in the story they heard, there would be a time when things would be destroyed and torn down. What would happen after that? (*Things would be built and planted.*) Invite the children to work together to build a new tower, as tall as they can. Suggest that this too, may be a hard task. Remind them that God gave Jeremiah a hard task, but he could do it too.

Reflecting on God's Grace MS

Have the children return to the masking tape line. Ask the children to move to the place that shows their response to the following:

- ▼ Build a building that people could live in.
- ▼ Listen to God.
- ▼ Speak God's words.
- ▼ Do what God calls me to do.

Emphasize that they are always the right age to do what God wants them to do.

Say that Jeremiah did what God asked him to do. Wonder what is hard about following God:

- ▼ How do you know when God is calling you to do something?
- ▼ What might God be calling you to do?



Singing

Give God an offering of music. Play and sing “Lord, I Want to Be a Christian”—SCM 24.

Turn off the candle.

C *For some children, listening and speaking may take longer. Allow time for these children to feel truly a part of the session. Be patient and encourage other children to do the same.*

RESPONDING IN GRATITUDE

Select activities appropriate for your group and the time available.



Claiming God’s Grace

M MS

Before the session, obtain a medium-sized cardboard box (such as a copier paper box). Draw a large face with an open mouth on one side of the box. Cut out the mouth to make a hole.

Remind the children that God gave Jeremiah words to speak. Tell them they are going to play a game with words God might give them to share with others.

Give each child five half-sheets of paper. Invite the children to think of words or phrases that God would put into their mouths. Then have them, or help them, write one word or phrase on each half-sheet of paper. You might write suggestions on newsprint for the children to copy.

Set the box on a chair on one side of the room. Determine the distance for the throwing line and mark it with a piece of masking tape.

Tell the children to crumple their papers into balls. Let them take turns throwing the words God gives them into the mouth on the box. Instruct them to shout out the words they have written on each paper ball as they toss it.

Celebrating God’s Grace

A MS C

Recall that Jeremiah heard God’s call to be a prophet. Ask the children to sit on the floor. Tell them you are going to read several unfinished sentences. If they want to finish a particular sentence, they should pop up (stand). If several children pop up at once, let each give her or his answer. The first sentence is an example:

- ▼ Today, I might not be called by God to preach a sermon, but I can . . . *(tell a Bible story or invite a friend to church or pray.)*
- ▼ Today, I might not be called by God to go to another country, but I can . . .
- ▼ Today, I might not be called by God to cook meals for homeless people, but I can . . .



- ▼ Today, I might not be called by God to give thousands of dollars to help people who are poor, but I can . . .
- ▼ Today, I might not be called by God to build a house for the homeless, but I can . . .
- ▼ Today, I might not be called by God to perform surgery to heal someone, but I can . . .
- ▼ Today, I might not be called by God to help stop a war, but I can . . .

Give the children the opportunity to suggest other unfinished sentences. Talk with them about their responses. Ask how it felt to realize that there are many things they can do for God. Ask how they might do some of those things this week.

Praying God's Grace

TD

When God calls the young boy Jeremiah, God reminds him that God formed him and knew him. Give each child a lump of play dough. Invite the children to form something from the clay that represents them. You may need to give the children some suggestions, such as forming something they like, something they like to do, or even a small sculpture of themselves. Invite the children to share their sculptures with the group.

Play “Our God, Fills Us with Love and Joy” as they sculpt.

After they have completed their sculptures, gather in a circle. Invite the child to your right to share his or her object and go around the circle until everyone who wants to share has done so.

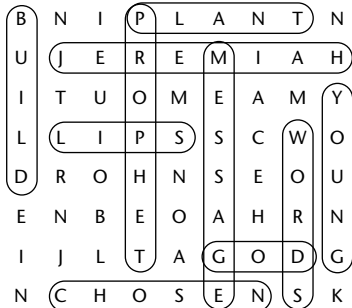
Have the children place the figures on a table and then gather in a circle around them. Lead the following echo prayer:

Thank you, God /
for forming us /
and knowing us. /
Help us
to listen to your call /
and to respond as Jeremiah did, /
by becoming your messengers. /
Amen. /

TD *Some children who have tactile sensitivities find working with clay or play dough unpleasant. Consider providing an option such as drawing.*



GN 1 Solution:



Extra Activity

Remind the children that Jeremiah heard God’s call and received God’s words to share with the people. Hand out copies of **GN 1** and pencils. Read aloud, the words that the children are to find. Provide time for the children to find the words from today’s story. Consider playing the story audio or music quietly while they work. When all have finished, discuss the following:

- ▼ Has there been a time when you have heard words you didn’t quite understand?
- ▼ How might Jeremiah have known what God meant by “dig up and then plant” and “tear down and then build up”?
- ▼ How might we hear God’s words?

LOVING AND SERVING GOD



Ask the children to help clean up the space.

Recall that today we heard about Jeremiah answering God’s call.

Sing together “I Will Exalt My God, My King”—**SCM 26**. Invite the children to imagine ways God may call them to share a message:

- ▼ What might the message from God be?
- ▼ Who might they be called to share it with?

Offer a few moments of silence as the children consider this call. Tell them they will get the chance to voice their ideas during the prayer.

Offer the following prayer:

Holy God, thank you for inviting us to join you in your work. When you ask us to be your messenger, sharing messages like (*prompt the children to name their ideas*), help us to respond: “I will go! Send me!” Amen.

Send each child with a blessing, “(Name), 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).

B N I P L A N T N
 U J E R E M I A H
 I T U O M E A M Y
 L L I P S S C W O
 D R O H N S E O U
 E N B E O A H R N
 I J L T A G O D G
 N C H O S E N S K

build
 chosen
 God
 Jeremiah
 lips

message
 plant
 prophet
 words
 young

