



God Hears Daniel's Prayers

Goal: To know that trust in God is an important element of growing in faith.

RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

. . . In Daniel 6:6-23

After the fall of Jerusalem, Daniel and three of his friends were exiled to Babylon where they were being trained so they “could serve before the king” (1:1-7, CEB).

After a series of incidents in which the young men maintained fidelity to their Jewish faith, officers and chief administrators persuaded the king to issue a law that “for thirty days anyone who says prayers to any god or human being except you, Your Majesty, will be thrown into a pit of lions” (6:7, CEB).

In response, Daniel prayed and praised God three times a day, “just like he always did” (v. 10, CEB). His enemies found him praying and reported this to the king. When the king tried to save him, the men invoked that “the law of Media and Persia, including every law and edict the king has issued, cannot be changed” (v. 15, CEB). So the king gave the order and Daniel was thrown into a pit of lions.

But the next morning, Daniel was unharmed. He said God had shut the lions' mouths and “not a scratch was found on him, because he trusted in his God” (v. 23, CEB). God's grace had preserved the faithful Daniel. He was grateful for God's protection.

. . . In Your Children's Experiences

For children, their “moral compass,” that which helps them know how to make good decisions, is something they learn at home, at school, and at church. This story about Daniel tells about a time when he acted faithfully in response to God, and how God protected him from harm. Children can connect easily with the drama and danger in the story as they hear it read and act it out. Having them imagine modern-day situations they face can help them consider how to make good and right decisions about living in response to God. It would be a great way to help them see the connections between this story and their lives.

. . . In Your Relationships with the Children

This memorable and vivid story of Daniel surviving the life-threatening danger of the lions' den is included in all children's Bible storybooks. As you tell this story to the children, be aware of their ways of engaging with the story. Some may connect with the miraculous nature of the way God protected Daniel. Others may be curious about God's saving presence with people today. Some children may be curious about Daniel's commitment to following God in spite of the consequences. As you can see, this story presents many options for their engagement and reflection.

God, who comes to us as Word, open my mind to a deeper understanding of the richness of faith. Amen.



Supplies

Music & Melodies

bit.ly/GGGMusicMelodies

Stories, Colors & More (SCM) i–iv, 13, 13a, 21, 23, 25

basic supplies
(see p. vii)

audio stories (optional)
(see p. vii)

internet-connected
device

cloth

candle

Responding

Celebrating

blindfold, chairs

Praying

art supplies

Offering

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

Extra

copies of **GN 2**; orange, yellow, and black construction paper; black markers

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.

Welcoming and Preparing C

Play “Dance and Sing” as the children arrive.

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

Ask a volunteer to open the Bible on the table to the book of Daniel.

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

Begin a conversation about courage by asking:

- ▼ What does the word *courage* mean to you?
- ▼ What shape or form might courage take?
- ▼ If courage were a color, what color might it be?

Set out paper and markers and invite the children to draw a picture of courage. Take a moment for volunteers to show and tell about their drawings. As the children draw, cut out the figures of Daniel standing, Daniel praying, the lion, the guards, and the king from **SCM 13a**. Invite volunteers who have finished drawing to tape a wooden craft stick to the back of each figure. Put aside for “Hearing the Story.”

Singing

Listen to “Dance and Sing”—**SCM 21**. Encourage the children to create steps for a circle dance. Some step suggestions include the following: circle right, circle left, come to the center, and raise arms up. Repeat the song and have the children sing along while dancing their steps.

Praying

Turn on the candle, reminding us of God’s presence. Pray:

Holy God, we praise you for all you have done and continue to do in the world. We know you are always with us, but sometimes it is hard to remember. Help us to place our trust in you. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.

T *For children struggling with transitions, set clear expectations and let them know how long activities should take.*



Preparing to Hear the Story T

Explain that today's story is about a Jewish person who lived long ago in a foreign culture outside of Israel. Daniel trusted God to be with him and Daniel showed his trust in God. Engage the children in conversation using the following questions:

- ▼ Who do you trust to take care of you when you are sick?
- ▼ Who do you trust when you are crossing a busy street?
- ▼ If you are lost, who do you trust to help you?
- ▼ How do you show you trust someone?

Suggest that the children listen for ways that Daniel trusted God and how Daniel demonstrated that trust in the Bible story.

Hearing the Story B L

Show the children the Bible and point out that the story comes from the book of Daniel.

Encourage the children to listen as you read **SCM 13**. Use your voice, expressions, feelings, and body to make the story livelier. Vary the tone, speed, and pitch of your voice to indicate changes in mood. Conclude by saying, "Word of wisdom, Word of grace," and prompt children to say, "Thanks be to God."

Ask for volunteers to put on a puppet show with the figures prepared earlier as you read the story again or listen to the story audio.

Repeat the puppet show, if desired, if there are others who would like to participate in the puppet show.

Reflecting on God's Grace LD B

Ask:

- ▼ What did Daniel do because he trusted God?
- ▼ How can prayer help you?

Read each of the situations in the sidebar and have the children work together to act them out. Encourage the children to demonstrate courage and trusting God even in difficult situations. After each scene, discuss what bad or good things might happen if they showed courage and trusted God.

Singing

Give God an offering of music. Play and sing "Our God, Fills Us with Love and Joy"—**SCM 25**. Invite the children to raise their arms in the air and spin them in circles while singing.

Turn off the candle.



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.

Situations:

- ▼ being with friends who are gossiping or saying mean things about others
- ▼ being tempted to cheat or steal
- ▼ observing family members waste water or other resources



RESPONDING IN GRATITUDE

Select activities appropriate for your group and the time available.

Celebrating God's Grace

A MS SD

This activity provides a tangible lesson in trust, especially helpful for children as they try to understand the concepts of *faith* and *trust*.

Tie a blindfold on one child. Use chairs to arrange a simple obstacle course. Lead the blindfolded child to the beginning of the obstacle course. Ask one child to lead the blindfolded child through the course by voice only, or have the children take turns giving directions (turn right, take three steps forward, and so on). The directions work best when one person speaks at a time. If others would like to be blindfolded, rearrange the obstacle course before each one begins.

Wonder aloud how it felt to have to trust someone or the group to walk through the obstacle course. Ask:

- ▼ Just as you trusted the people giving directions when you were blindfolded, even though you couldn't see them, how can we trust God to help us even though we can't see God?

SD *Some children may be uncomfortable being blindfolded. Help these children by altering activities to avoid the situation or by choosing an option such simply closing their eyes or holding an object in front to block some vision.*

Praying God's Grace

C

Remind the children that Daniel prayed to God, showing his trust in God's help and care. Wonder together whether Daniel was a person who prayed often in his life. Ask the children what they think Daniel might have prayed at the time of this story.

Explain that if we have a habit of praying, we may pray with more confidence when we are afraid or anxious. Using the lists of situations from in "Reflecting on God's Grace," invite the children to choose one situation. As a group create a prayer for that situation. Tell them that prayer is a conversation with God. Use the following format. You may want to write the prayer on a sheet of newsprint.

- ▼ Tell God the situation.
- ▼ Ask for the help they need.
- ▼ Thank God.
- ▼ Make a declaration or statement of trust or praise.

Invite the children to all respond "Amen" at the end of the prayer.



Offering God's Grace



Remind the children that Daniel prayed to God everyday. It was a part of his life. Tell them that they will make a prayer cube as a way to remember to pray each day.

Hand out copies of **GN 1** and read the different sides of the prayer cube to the children. Invite the children to make suggestions for each of the types of prayer:

- ▼ "Wow!" might be a prayer of praise or joy such as, "Wow God! that's a beautiful sunset."
- ▼ "Please bless . . ." might be a prayer for someone in need such as, "Please bless my grandma because she is sick."

When you come to "Amen," tell the children that this is the way we commonly end our prayers. Practice different emotions when saying, "Amen."

Encourage the children to decorate their cubes and cut them out. Show them how to fold and tape the sides to make a cube. Assist as needed.

When they have finished making their cubes, invite them to toss the cubes a few times and say a prayer.

Encourage the children to take their cube home and use for their own daily prayers and prayers with their families.

Extra Activity

Invite the children to make lions to help them share the story at home.

Hand out copies of **GN 2** and art supplies. Show the children how to cut out each of the three heart templates on **GN 2**. Invite them to use the largest template to cut out a heart shape from the orange construction paper, the medium template to cut a heart shape from the yellow paper, and the small one to cut out a black heart. Help the children assemble their lions, encouraging them to follow the diagram on **GN 2** as follows: Glue the yellow heart upside down on top of the orange one. Then glue the small black heart onto the yellow heart to make the nose. Draw the eyes with a black marker.

Show the children how to randomly cut slits and small chunks around the edge of the orange heart to make it look like fur on a lion's mane. Have them cut out the cloud reminder and glue it to the back.

Encourage the children to take the reminders home as a way to share faith with their families.



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

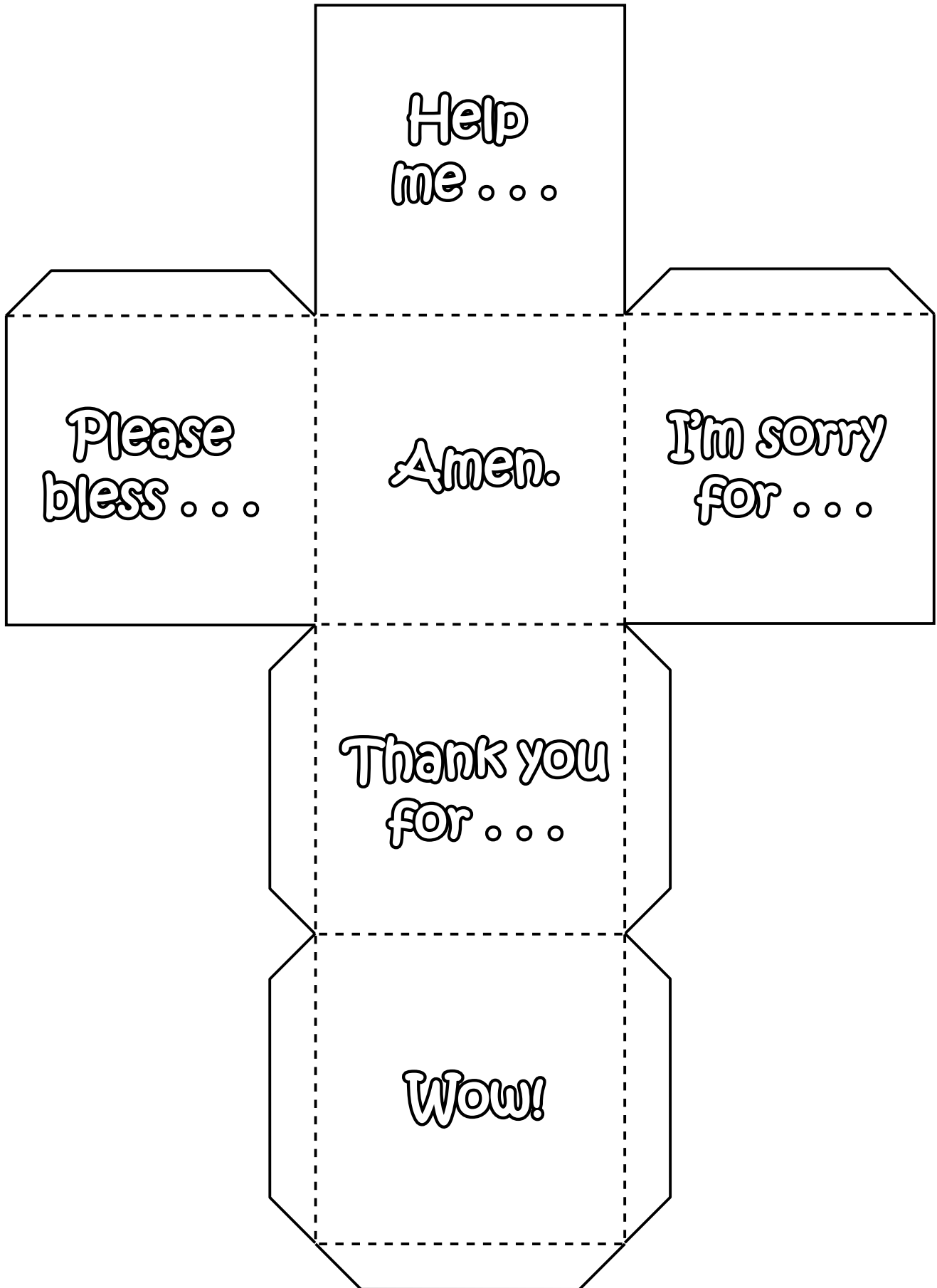
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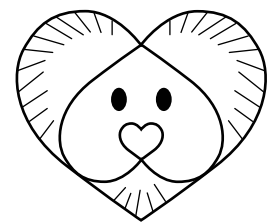
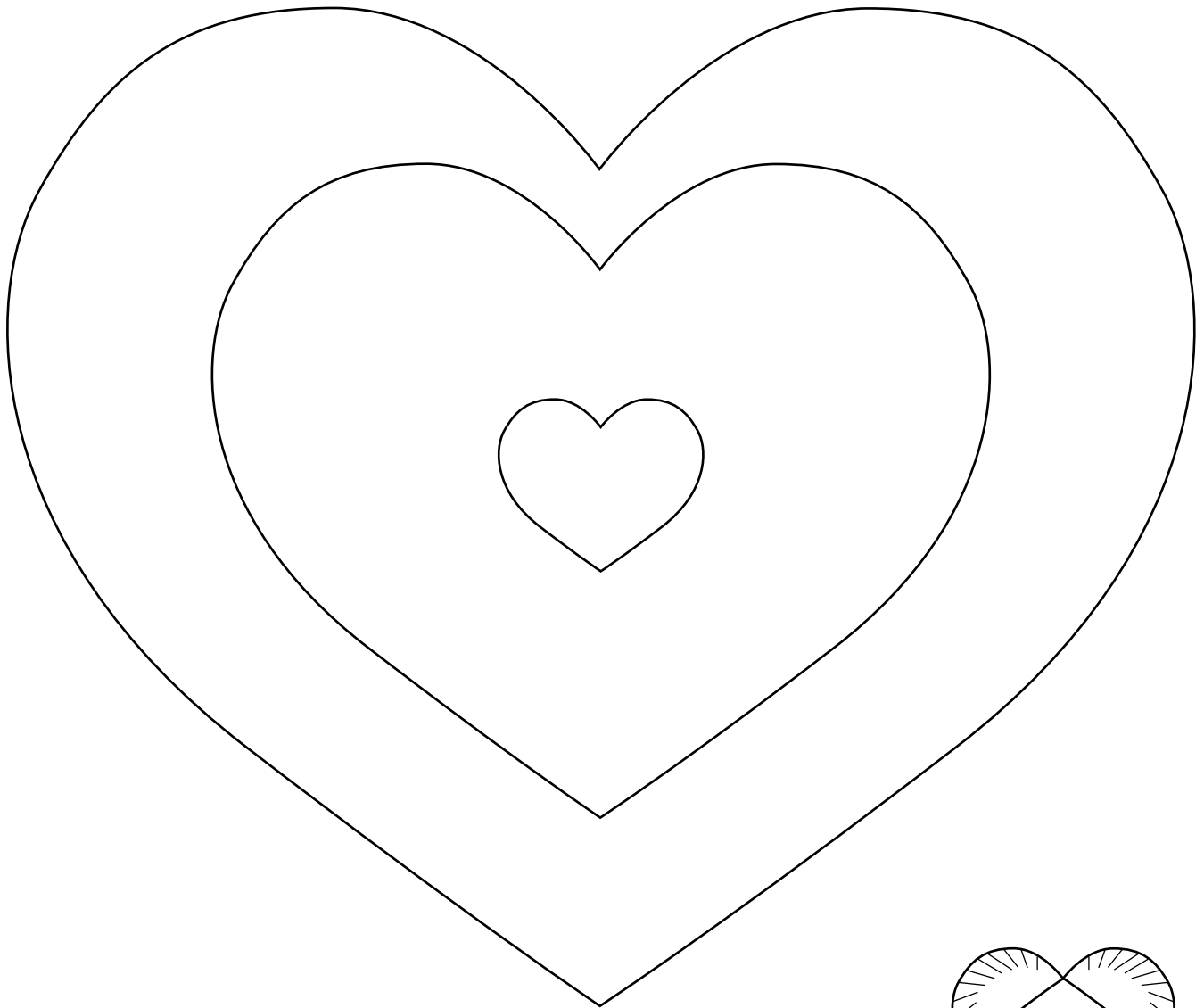
Ask the children to help clean the space.

Invite the children to gather in a circle. Explain that there are different ways to pray. You can kneel, bow, look down with your eyes closed, put your hands together, or raise your arms and look upward. Play “God Gives Us a Gift (Dios nos da un regalo)”—**SCM 23**. Tell the children that whenever the music stops they should pose in a prayer position. Play and stop the music several times. When the music stops, invite children to share a prayer concern.

After the last stop, invite them to choose their favorite prayer position. Lead a prayer, remembering to name the children’s concerns. Remember them in your prayers during the week as well.

Send each child with the following blessing: “(Name), go in peace to love and serve the Lord.”





You can trust
in God's love.