



God Saves the People

Goal: To trust that God works for people who struggle for freedom and justice.

RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

. . . In Exodus 12:31-42

When the people of Israel were set to leave their slavery in Egypt, they did not have much time. They took the dough before it had been baked into bread. They left with unleavened cakes they made from the unleavened dough, but they had no other provisions for themselves (v. 39).

God was at work to save the people. All had to cooperate together. They all had to get ready to leave, make cakes of the unleavened bread, and depart the slavery of Egypt.

God freed the Israelites, the truth in the story's assertion of God's faithful care and liberation of those who are oppressed. The people responded to God's action by working together so they could depart in gratitude for what God was doing for them.

The Exodus story has inspired many who have experienced some form of oppression and struggled to be free—the American civil rights and South African anti-apartheid movements, Latin American liberation efforts, and the struggles of indigenous peoples throughout the world. In our world today, who are like the oppressed slaves? Who is like Pharaoh? What does freedom mean to you? How does God speak to you in your quest for freedom? How have you walked with others who are in search of freedom and justice? Where have you experienced liberation from bondage?

. . . In Your Children's Experiences

Society teaches children to idolize athletes and entertainers. Children are encouraged to practice the disciplines of sports and entertainment and to emulate the best and the brightest in those fields. The church is potentially the one community that lifts up champions of justice. It is up to the church to train children to stand up against unfair practices, give to those in need, speak for the voiceless, and defend the innocent. If children know bullies, they know Pharaoh. How can you help the children stand up to the pharaohs of the world?

. . . In Your Relationships with the Children

Having some unleavened bread for children to taste is a great way into the story of God's people who left their homes in Egypt in such a hurry that the bread didn't have time to rise. As you tell the story, help the children understand how the Israelites helped each other as they left on their journey. Invite them to think about and name people who have helped care for them. Then invite them to name those whom they have helped to care for, either in their family or neighborhood. Be aware of the voices of all children, encouraging and waiting for each voice to be heard.

Gracious God, I am grateful for all those who work to help people be free. Amen.



Supplies

Music & Melodies

bit.ly/GGGMusicMelodies

Stories, Colors & More (SCM) i–iv, 5, 5a, 5b, 5c, 20, 21

basic supplies
(see p. vii)

audio stories (optional)
(see p. vii)

internet-connected
device

candle

green cloth

rope, brick, flatbread

Responding

Praying

copies of **Grace Notes (GN) 1**, clear self-adhesive plastic, pita bread or crackers, jelly, napkins or small paper plates, table knives, water or juice

Offering

copies of **GN 2** on card stock

Extra

copies of **GN 3**

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.

“Praying God’s Grace” requires more prep.

Welcoming and Preparing



Play “Go Down, Moses” as children arrive. Welcome each child with “Grace and peace be with you, *(Name)*.” Prompt the children to respond: “And also with you.”

Invite the children to help prepare the setting as they arrive. Create a worship center with a green cloth, a candle, a piece of rope, a brick, flatbread, plate, and a Bible. Ask children to help prepare today’s “Responding in Gratitude” activities. Suggest that one or two lead today’s singing.

Gather the children and invite them to sit in a circle. Tell them that God called Moses to go to Pharaoh and ask him to let the Hebrew people go. Remind them that Moses was reluctant to go speak to Pharaoh. Play the following game:

- ▼ The children pretend to be finding someone to talk to Pharaoh.
- ▼ Keep up a slow, but steady rhythm of tap, snap, tap, snap, tapping their thighs and snapping their fingers as you say the words:

Group: Who wants to go and talk with old Pharaoh?

Leader: *(Name)* wants to go and talk with old Pharaoh.

Child: Who, me?

Group: Yes, you!

Child: Not me!

Group: Then who?

Child (now the leader): *(Name)* wants to go and talk with old Pharaoh. *(Continue.)*

Singing



Play and sing “Freedom Is Coming”—**SCM 21**. Stand in a circle and dance to the music. Take turns dancing from one side of the circle through the middle to the other side. Have everybody change sides at least once.

Praying

Turn on the candle as a reminder 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.”

Moses was placed in a basket by his mother to save his life and then rescued by the Pharaoh's daughter.

Moses encountered the burning bush and heard God's call to set the Hebrew people free.

The Hebrew people were slaves in Egypt and Moses was sent to set them free.

Preparing to Hear the Story

C L M

Encourage the children to tell what they remember about Moses. Show **SCM 5a**, **5b**, and **5c** to help them recall the stories. See the sidebar for answers. Ask the children to recall what God wanted Moses to do. (Tell Pharaoh to free the slaves.)

Wonder together what Moses did. Wonder what the children would have done if they had been Moses. Tell the children that Moses did lead the people out of Egypt, but they needed to leave quickly. Look at the items in the worship space and wonder what part of Moses' story they remind us of (rope—slavery; brick—the Hebrews were forced to make bricks for the Egyptians; flatbread—unleavened bread baked quickly).

C *For some children, listening and speaking may take longer. Give children time to respond and to let them know their contribution is valued.*



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.

Hearing the Story

L

Invite one of the children to find Exodus 12 and place the open Bible on the worship center.

Explain that the word *exodus* means to leave or escape. Wonder with the children why the Moses story is called Exodus. Mention the similarities between the words *exodus* and *exit*.

Explain that the Hebrew people had become slaves of the Egyptians. The Hebrews escaped and became refugees—people who leave their homes to get away from persecution. Encourage the children to listen for how the Hebrews are refugees.

Read **SCM 5** or use the story audio. If you are reading, use your voice and expressions to make the story come to life. Conclude the reading by saying, "Word of wisdom, Word of grace," and prompt the children to say, "Thanks be to God."

Reflecting on God's Grace

Comment that people leave their homes today and become refugees. Some children may be disturbed to hear that people lose their homes. Some children may have had this experience.

Ask the children where God is active in this story. Remind the children that God's grace is a love bigger than we can imagine. Suggest that God freed the Hebrew people because God is gracious and loving. God heard their prayers for freedom. God saw how they were treated. Wonder how we can know that God is gracious, especially when we are afraid or unsure.



Singing

Play and listen to “Go Down, Moses”—**SCM 20**. Explain to the children that the song is a spiritual, a song sung by African American slaves in America more than 200 years ago. The African American slaves would have known and felt many of the same emotions and feelings as the Hebrew slaves. Learn and sing the refrain.

Turn off the candle.

RESPONDING IN GRATITUDE

Select activities appropriate for your group and for the time available.

Claiming God’s Grace



Invite the children to imagine they are the Hebrew people, hurrying to leave slavery in Egypt. Encourage them to work together to pack a bag while they race the clock.

Collect objects from the room and stack them on the floor at one end of the room. Have the children line up at the opposite end of the room. Give a plastic garbage bag to the first person. He or she runs to the pile, stuffs all the items in the bag, runs back, and says to the next person in line, “I’m a Hebrew! I’m leaving Egypt in a hurry!” The first player then returns to the far end of the room, empties the bag, returns and hands it to the second player, who repeats the process. Play until all children have completed the relay.

To add to the urgency, say, “Hurry! Pharaoh is coming!” When the children have finished the relay, remind the children that the Hebrews became refugees. Ask:

- ▼ I wonder, “How did the Hebrew people feel when they had to get ready to escape their hardship and slavery in Egypt?”
- ▼ I wonder, “Were they afraid, happy, sad, excited, or a mix of emotions?”
- ▼ I wonder, “Where is God when people today have to leave their countries to escape hardship and oppression?”



Praying God’s Grace



Explain that just as the Hebrew people prepared a special meal the night before they left on their big journey, the children will make place mats for a meal together.

Give each child a large sheet of white construction paper and a copy of **GN 1**. Cut out the psalm and glue it on the construction paper. Ask the children to illustrate today’s story around the edges, such as a map showing footprints or a family eating bread. When they have finished decorating their place mats, cover the construction paper with clear self-adhesive plastic.

If there are six or more children in your group, form two equal teams. Provide each team with a pile of similar items and a plastic garbage bag.



Using crackers or pita bread cut into quarters, invite the children to spread jelly. Provide water or juice to drink.

As they are eating, remind the children that the unleavened bread became a symbol to the Hebrew people of having to leave their homes quickly. Explain that Jewish people continue to celebrate the Passover, a time to remember when God “passed over” their homes, keeping them safe from harm, and led them to freedom.

Say the prayer on the place mat and enjoy a remembering meal. Consider sharing stories of experiencing God’s guidance or special meal that the children remember.

Offering God’s Grace

A LG

Remind the children that when the Hebrew people left slavery in Egypt, they became refugees. Say that the world today continues to have refugees who:

- ▼ flee their homes, sometimes without anything other than the clothes they are wearing
- ▼ fear for their lives
- ▼ may live in a country where people are kidnapped or killed for saying what they believe
- ▼ may be in a country where they are not allowed to worship God
- ▼ may live in a country where there is a war
- ▼ may have been doctors, farmers, factory workers, lawyers, or teachers in their home country, but when they come to a new country, they often have to start all over again.

If any of the children are recent immigrants or refugees, be especially sensitive to their feelings during this session. Provide time, if they wish, to share their experiences.

Provide copies of **GN 2** on card stock and craft supplies. Read aloud the words from the postcard. Allow time for the children to decorate the card. Tell the children that you will collect the cards and give them to your church’s welcoming committee.

Extra Activity

LD C

Provide copies of **GN 3** and crayons. Have the children turn the paper face down and wait for your signal.

Tell them that Moses told his friends and neighbors to pack what they needed quickly so they could leave to get to a free land. Tell the children that when you say, “Ready, Set, Pack” to find and circle the items on the packing list as fast as possible.

When all have found the items, ask what they would pack if they were moving and put stars on those items. Wonder together how many of the items are the same today as they were in the time of Moses.

A *Adapt any activity to suit your children’s needs. Ask yourself, “How can I change this activity so that this child can do it?”*



LOVING AND SERVING GOD



Ask the children to help clean the space.

Explain that the Hebrew people needed to love and support one another to take off on such a long, hard journey. Ask the children to identify ways we show support and encouragement to one another (hugging, giving high fives, helping one another). As the children feel comfortable, invite them to share hugs, high fives, or handshakes with one another.

Gather the children and tell them that a litany is a prayer in which a leader makes a statement and then the people respond. Explain that “We give you thanks, O God” is the response they will give when you pause after each statement. Pause at each asterisk (*).


For calling Moses to do a hard job,*
For the help you gave Moses in doing the job,*
For calling us to do your work,*
For helping us do what you call us to do,*
For promising to always be with us.,*
Amen.

Close by saying, “Remember that God is always with you. Go in grace to love and serve the Lord!”

Remind the children about the free e-book and challenge them to read the story during the week.



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).

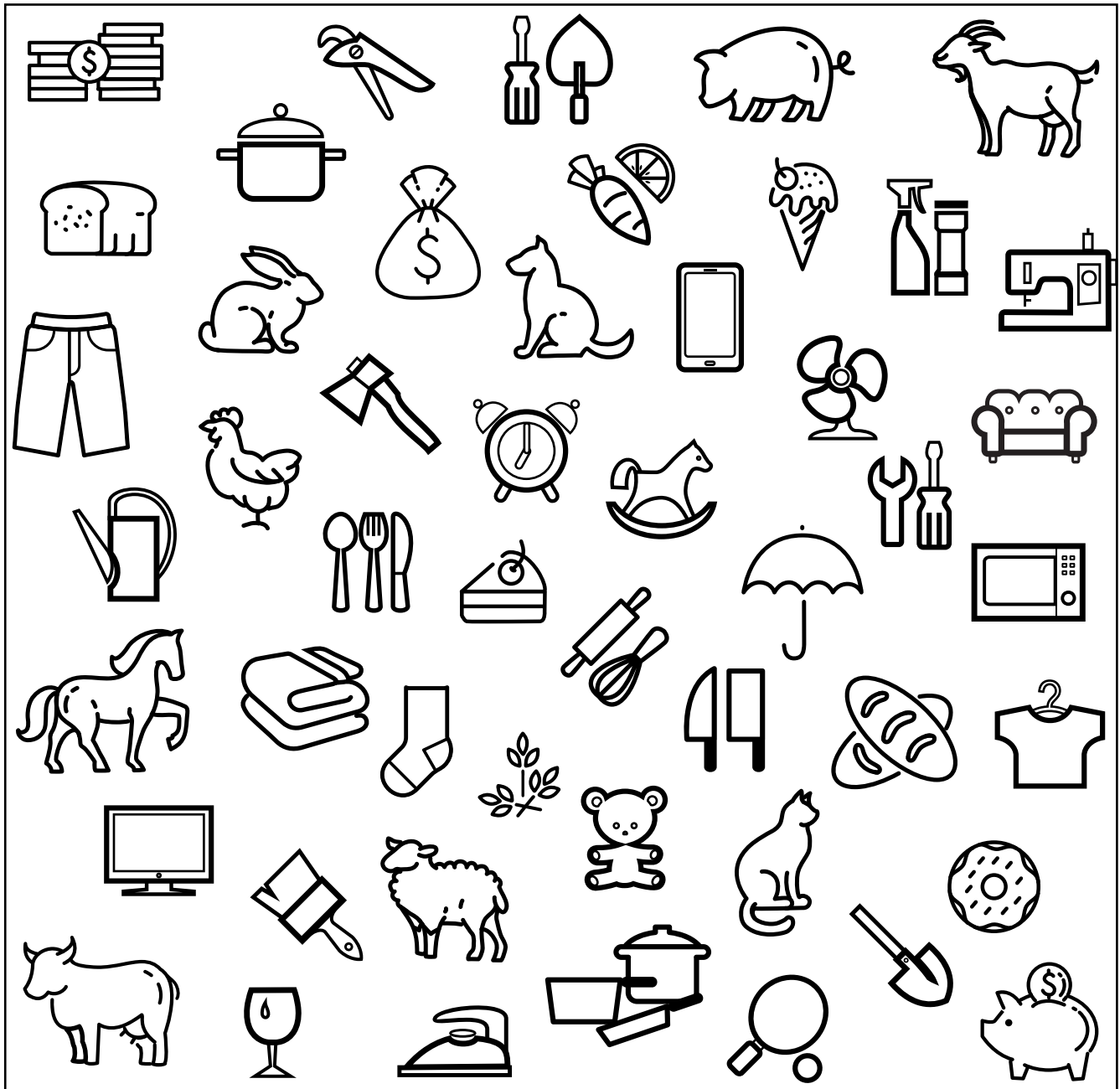


Praise the LORD,
all nations!
Worship God,
all peoples!
Because God's grace
toward us is strong,
the LORD's faithfulness
lasts forever!
Praise the LORD!

—based on Psalm 117

Welcome to our community!

Welcome to our community!



Packing List:

- money
- knives
- clothes
- goat
- herbs
- oxen

- silverware
- pots and pans
- lamb
- flatbread
- sleeping mats

