



# God Proclaims Jubilee

**Goal: To celebrate God's call to all creation for rest, renewal, and restoration.**

## RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

### . . . In Leviticus 25:1-12, 25-28, 35-42

On Mt. Sinai, God gave several provisions to Moses for ways the nation of Israel was to live. One was that every seventh year, the land was to have a “sabbath,” a year of freedom and rest when it was not worked by humans. This was “a Sabbath to the LORD” (25:4, CEB). All people were to have access to what the land produced on its own.

After seven sabbatical years, or at fifty years, a “Jubilee year” was to be celebrated. It was to be made “holy, proclaiming freedom throughout the land to all its inhabitants” (v. 10, CEB) and everyone was to “return to your family property and to your extended family.” In the Jubilee year, land would revert to its original owners and “all inhabitants”—including slaves and servants—would be freed (compare with Leviticus 25:23-55; 27:16-25; and Numbers 36:4). This was to prevent the growth of large estates and to help those in need.

These provisions point to the theological conviction that all land belongs to God. The people of Israel were only tenants. To let the land rest and practice “jubilee” was to highlight this conviction. God's grace gives the land. The people use it with gratitude.

### . . . In Your Children's Experiences

Children are keenly aware of the need for rest: time for renewing their bodies with good sleep so they can wake refreshed to begin a new day. This story from Leviticus of celebrating a jubilee year to renew and refresh the earth may be a new concept for the children, but it is one with which they will be able to connect. Help them see how the ways we care for the earth are just as important as the ways we help our bodies rest.

The story for today talks about jubilee as a time of forgiveness. Invite the children to imagine the things that could be forgiven if there was a jubilee year proclaimed.

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

Children will probably be familiar with the word *Sabbath* in connection to Sunday as the Sabbath, a day to gather with others in community at church. You can help them remember the creation story in the first chapter of Genesis and how God created the seventh day for humans to rest. The story for today extends the concept of rest to include how we let the land rest and, in doing so, how we say thank you to God by taking care of the created world that has been given to our care.

The year of jubilee also focused on remembering and forgiving in preparation for moving ahead. Children will be able to share their own stories of times when they have been forgiven or a time when they forgave someone else.

*Holy God, help me to keep your justice in my heart.  
Guide me as I try to walk in your way. Amen.*

## Supplies

### Music & Melodies

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

### Stories, Colors & More (SCM) i–iv, 7, 14, 23

basic supplies  
(see p. vii)

audio stories (optional)  
(see p. vii)

internet-connected  
device

cloth

candle

cardboard tubes

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

## Responding

### Celebrating

water, corn syrup, clear  
dishwashing liquid,  
large bowl, measuring  
cup, ladle, small  
containers with lids,  
bendable wire (can be  
floral wire or heavier  
gauge wire), wire cutter,  
pliers, assorted plastic  
beads

### Extra

copies of **GN 2**

## 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.

“Celebrating God’s Grace” requires more prep.

### Welcoming and Preparing

**LG A B M MS**

Play “All Creation God Made” 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 prepare a worship space with a cloth, candle, and Bible.

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

Give each child a cardboard tube, a variety of sections of empty wrapping paper rolls, paper towel tubes, and toilet paper tubes. These will be the ram’s horns (trumpets), called a *shofar*, in today’s story. Have them decorate the tubes with colorful designs using markers. Have everyone practice blowing through a cardboard tube to make a noise.

Engage the children in conversation about various needs that all people have and how they celebrate giving thanks. If they fail to mention intangible needs such as love, companionship, affection, and encouragement, suggest those ideas as well as food, shelter, and other necessities. If time allows, invite the children to cut pictures from magazines that show people who are celebrating, and glue the pictures onto poster board.

### Singing

Play and sing “All Creation God Made”—**SCM 14**.

### Praying

**L**

Turn on the candle.

If you made a poster, call attention to it. Invite them to tell about the pictures they chose and what the people in the pictures may be celebrating.

Invite everyone to respond to the following echo prayer:

God, help us / to hear your voice. /  
God, help us / to follow your words. /  
God, help us / to show your love. /  
Amen. /



### Preparing to Hear the Story

Ask the children what they remember about the story of Moses. If not mentioned, remind them of the following details:

- ▼ The Hebrews were slaves in Egypt.
- ▼ God sent Moses to free the people from the pharaoh.
- ▼ Moses led the people to freedom through the Red Sea.
- ▼ Moses led the people through the desert for forty years.

Explain that today's story takes place forty years after Moses led the Exodus from Egypt. The people are about to enter a new land. Moses is giving a speech about the ways they can follow God in their new country. Wonder what kinds of things Moses might have said.

### Hearing the Story

L B

Invite a volunteer to find Leviticus 25 and place the open Bible on the worship table.

Practice the call and response in the story:

Leader: Sound the trumpets! (*Blow the horns.*)

**Children: It's time to celebrate!**

Together: The day of freedom is here!

Prompt the children to blow through their shofars "ram's horns" every time they hear or say "trumpets."

Read **SCM 7**. Conclude by saying, "Word of wisdom, Word of grace," and prompt the children to say, "Thanks be to God."

### Reflecting on God's Grace

C

Distribute copies of **GN 1** and talk about what the people are doing in the pictures. Which one shows how God wanted the Hebrew people to live during the jubilee? Invite the children to color that picture as you read the story again. Allow time to find the two shofars, a ram's horn used as a trumpet (*top left picture and middle picture*). Wonder with the children:

- ▼ I wonder, "What was life like in Bible times?"
- ▼ I wonder, "Why would God want people to rest?"
- ▼ I wonder, "Why would God want us to let the land rest?"
- ▼ I wonder, "Why would God want the slaves to be freed?"
- ▼ I wonder, "How might the people have celebrated and thanked God?"

### Singing

M MS

Give God an offering of music. Play and sing "God Gives Us a Gift (Dios nos da un regalo)"—**SCM 23**. Invite children to dance along to the music. 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](http://www.pcusastore.com).



## RESPONDING IN GRATITUDE

Select activities appropriate for your group and the time available.

### Claiming God's Grace



Remind the children that a *jubilee* meant people's debts would be forgiven and people enslaved could go free.

Play a game of "Freedom Tag." Choose someone to be "It," who tries to freeze the others. When someone is frozen, she or he must stand still. They are not free to move again until three people have tagged them. As each person tags them, they must call out, "Juba" on the first two tags and "Jubilee!" when they are set free. Another version is to have players stand with their legs apart after they are tagged. They can be freed only after three players have crawled through their legs.

After the game, talk about the experience of waiting to be released using the following questions:

- ▼ How do you think it would feel to have to wait seven years to be free?
- ▼ What or whom do you see in our world that needs to be freed?
- ▼ How do you think we can help?



### Celebrating God's Grace



Explain to the children that there is a custom among people in some Asian countries, such as Singapore and Thailand, of releasing caged birds into the air or fish into the seas at some festivals as a symbol of kindness or freedom. On some festive occasions in North America, such as weddings, bubbles are used to celebrate as a symbol of joy and new journeys.

Help the children make a bubble solution. In a large bowl, combine 6 cups water, 1 cup corn syrup, and 2 cups clear dishwashing liquid. Let the children take turns slowly stirring it. Provide a small container with a lid for each child and ladle some of the solution into each one.

Give each child a piece of wire about 18" long to make a bubble wand. Show them how to bend the wire gently in the center. Help them twist the bent end of the wire together a few times to form a circle. Thread some beads over both free ends of the wire to make a handle about 4.5" long. After the last bead, have them separate the two wires and bend each wire around the beads, and then thread it back up the handle. Wrap the wire around the outside a couple of times to hold all the beads in place. If you are using a heavy gauge wire, have pliers on hand to secure the beads at the end.

Let the children blow some bubbles. Tell them that you are releasing the bubbles into the air, giving thanks, and celebrating God's freeing grace.





### Praying God's Grace M

Explain that the word *sabbath* means “to rest” and that the seventh year of rest reflects God resting on the seventh day in the creation story. God wants us to rest just as God wants the farmland to rest. Sabbath is a time for worship, being with our families, and enjoying nature. Sabbath is different from our regular days.

Gather together and sit quietly. Dim the lights if you can. Invite the children to count their breaths about ten times. Invite the children to do this again, but now this time have them use a word or phrase that focuses them on God, such as, “Thank you, God,” “Thank you, Jesus,” or “I love you, God.”

Explain that if they need to rest this week, they may want to do this exercise again. Say a prayer giving God thanks for encouraging us to keep our work, play, and rest balanced.

M *Some children need to move more than others which makes sitting still a difficult task. Set clear expectations with boundaries for appropriate movement to meet the needs of a child while not disrupting the rest of the group.*

### Extra Activity

Hand out copies of **GN 3** and crayons or markers. Remind the children that Moses told his people that they would work the fields for six years and then rest for one year. Tell the children that before they can rest, they need to find the ten differences in the two pictures. While they work, wonder about differences between *rest* and *sabbath*. Ask, “What might a sabbath have that rest alone does not?”

### LOVING AND SERVING GOD LG

Ask the children to help clean the space.

Invite the children to gather in a circle. Sing “God Gives Us a Gift (Dios nos da un regalo)”—**SCM 23**.

Ask the children how they can rest and pray at different times this week.

Invite a child to close with a prayer thanking God for times of work and times of rest. Send the children, saying to each, “(Name), go in peace and take time to rest.”

#### GN 3 Solution:

birds, belt, boy, dog, hat, palm tree, shepherd's crook, sleeve, tambourine, tent



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).



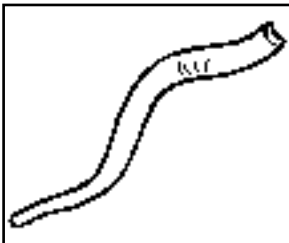




# Find the Hidden Symbols

A ram's horn is also called a *shofar*.

In Bible times, a priest blew a ram's horn to announce that the year of jubilee was starting. Two ram's horns are hidden on this page.



Can you find them?







