



God Speaks in Stillness

Goal: To practice attentiveness to God.

RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

. . . In 1 Kings 19:1-18

King Ahab was perhaps the worst of all the kings of Israel. His wife, Jezebel, was a Baal worshiper (Baal means owner or lord). In Canaan, the Baals were nature gods, owners of particular localities, and controllers of fertility. This religion focused on the cycles of the year, and the people practiced cult activities such as child sacrifice and prostitution to ensure the coming of rains. Ahab and Jezebel imposed this entire system on Israel.

The prophet Elijah spoke out against these practices. He even stood before King Ahab and prophesied a drought. It came, but the people remained unconvinced. King Ahab blamed Elijah and instituted a manhunt for him. The time arrived for God to end the drought and show King Ahab the error of his ways. Elijah proclaimed that Ahab forsook the commandments of God. Elijah commanded King Ahab to meet him at Mount Carmel. The king brought four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and four hundred prophets of Asherah. The term *Asherim* (Hebrew plural of Asherah) refers to male and female fertility symbols associated with the worship of the Canaanite goddess Asherah. The “showdown on Mount Carmel” proceeded. God destroyed the Baal prophets. For this, Jezebel vowed to take Elijah’s life. Elijah witnessed the glory, but his confidence in God soon failed. Elijah ran for his life, suddenly too fearful for his own safety to trust God, who had just given him victory!

Where would Elijah find grace? In the stillness of God’s steadfast presence!

. . . In Your Children’s Experiences

Peer pressure and uncertainties are some dominant factors in the lives of children today. Children can identify with fear and apprehension, though they may not name it so. Though their issues may be like Elijah’s or different (or both), they are real. Moreover, the children’s apprehensions know no socioeconomic, racial, ethnic, or “place” boundaries. Many children experience self-doubt. Even though some of these fears are unexpressed, they are with the children. They seek comfort and reassurance. Give substantive thought to how to help children be attentive to God’s steadfast presence, especially in the still and quiet times.

. . . In Your Relationships with the Children

Children are eager for and open to discovery. Lead them gently and securely into discovering some of their fears and naming them. They can pray to God about the fear, read about biblical people who faced fears, seek advice from parents and other trusted adults, find their own quiet space where they can talk with God about their fears, and then trust God to help them handle and overcome fears. When listening for God’s answer, encourage the children to realize that a solution to any fear may come to mind the moment they pray about it, or it may come awhile later. But it will come.

O God, lead me into a quiet place so that I might know and trust your presence during my deepest fears. Amen.



Supplies

Music & Melodies

bit.ly/GGGMusicMelodies

Stories, Colors & More (SCM) i–iv, 10, 16, 25

basic supplies
(see p. vii)

audio stories (optional)
(see p. vii)

internet-connected
device

cloth

candle

dark bedsheets

Responding

Claiming

Grace Notes (GN) 1,
goldfish crackers, pillow,
red and blue crepe
paper streamers

Celebrating

GN 2

Offering

GN 3, embroidery floss,
liquid starch, balloons,
hairdryers (optional)

Extra

copies of **GN 4**

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” and “Offering God’s Grace” require more prep.

Welcoming and Preparing **LG**

As children arrive, have loud lively music, as loud as reasonable, playing in the background.

Invite the children to help prepare the setting as they arrive. Today’s story takes place near a cave. Create one using dark bedsheets, chairs, and any other supplies you have in your room. Children will be sitting outside the cave for worship and to hear the story.

Encourage the children to create a worship center just outside the cave. Place a table, a cloth, a candle, and a Bible.

Ask children to help prepare today’s activities. Suggest that one or two lead today’s singing.

When you feel that the group is ready, turn off the music. Invite the children to sit at the entrance to the cave in silence. Allow for fidgeting until all are settled. Then say, “Grace and peace be with you.” Prompt the children to respond, “And also with you.”

Tell the children that today’s story is about a messenger from God called Elijah who, at a time he was afraid, sought God and found the voice of God in a whisper.

Singing

Elijah knew that his life was in God’s hands. Play “The Whole World Is in God’s Hands”—**SCM 16**—as children listen. Invite them to think about what the song is saying and to create movements they can do while remaining seated. Play the song again, adding the actions that the children created.

Praying **M**

Turn on the candle. Remind the children that the candle represents God’s light and presence. Encourage a few moments of still silence as children focus on the flame. You can invite one of the children to pray or use the prayer below:

Caring God, we know that you are always with us, but sometimes we get scared and forget. Help us remember, through Elijah’s story, that even when we are scared and life is hard, you are with us and take care of us. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.



Preparing to Hear the Story C L

Comment that today's story tells us about a time when Elijah went to hide in a cave because he was very afraid. Have a conversation about what the sounds of the cave would be like, and if it was dark or cold.

Share that the story they are about to hear happens after Elijah proved that God was real by defeating false prophets that wanted the people of Israel to worship other gods. Ahab, the king of Israel, wanted the people to worship this god, and he sent his army to capture Elijah. Wonder together:

- ▼ I wonder, "How do you think Elijah felt when he was running away?"
- ▼ I wonder, "How did God help Elijah during his journey?"



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.

Be aware of 1 Kings 19:4, when Elijah asks for God to take his life. Elijah is exhausted and terrified, but even in this moment, he turns to God for help.

Hearing the Story C L

Invite a child to find 1 Kings 19 in the Bible and place it on the table in the worship space. Encourage the children to pay attention to Elijah's mood and feelings, and where he finds God. Read **SCM 10**. Conclude the reading by saying, "Word of wisdom, Word of grace," and prompt children to say, "Thanks be to God."

Ask the children to close their eyes and imagine what Elijah was doing and feeling during this time. Read the story again or play the story audio. When the story ends, ask the children to open their eyes and to tell you about images and feelings they identified. Encourage conversation by asking how Elijah felt when he was inside the cave and what he might have thought about or felt during the silence.

Reflecting on God's Grace M

Invite the children to talk about times when they have experienced fear like Elijah. Share experiences you have had as well. Ask:

- ▼ Have you prayed to God during those times?
- ▼ Have you felt that God listens to you?
- ▼ What kind of message do you think God sends?
- ▼ Do you think God whispers?
- ▼ In what times or spaces do you find God's presence?

Listening M

Take time once again to sit in silence. Play "Harp Music" as children listen. Remark how God can give us peace during our times of fear. Turn off the candle.

- M *Some children need to move more than others which makes sitting still a difficult task. Set clear expectations for appropriate movement.*



RESPONDING IN GRATITUDE

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



Claiming God's Grace

MS FA

Before the session, cut apart the signs on GN 1 to use at four stations.

Ask the children to help you set up a simple course, described below. Have a volunteer place the signs at each station.

Remind the children that Elijah was afraid and went to several places to find God. Tell them that they are going to pretend to be Elijah and go looking for God.

Line the children up and describe Elijah's journey to them using the stops on the course. Have them start the course one at a time. Wait about twenty seconds between each start.

1. Elijah went to the desert and was tired. Stop to rest in a chair. Count to ten.
2. Elijah woke up and found food and water. Eat five goldfish crackers and drink a small cup of water.
3. Elijah went to the mountain and rested. Lie down and rest on a pillow. Count to ten.
4. Elijah heard the wind, felt the earth quake, and saw the fire. Wave blue and red crepe paper streamers and stomp feet. Have streamers for each child so the children can continue to wave the streamers until everyone has finished with the course.
5. Then there was silence. Everyone stop and be silent! After a few moments of silence, whisper quietly, "Elijah, I am with you always!"

Gather the children in a circle and have them sit in silence with their eyes closed. During that time, move behind each child and whisper, "(Name), God is with you always."

Celebrating God's Grace

A VI

Before the session, cut out the cards with words on GN 2.

Invite the children to play several rounds of charades. Have one of them select a slip of paper and act out the word or phrase using only silent motions. Invite the other children to guess the clue. Traditionally, the child who guesses correctly gets to go next. Instead, consider taking turns to create a more noncompetitive environment.

VI *Students with visual impairments include those with mildly impaired vision and those who are blind. If you choose to do charades, describe actions with as much detail as possible. Be as specific as possible to help create mental pictures.*



Offering God's Grace

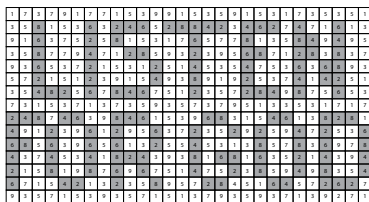


We know that God is all around us, but we sometimes find it hard to see or hear God. Make string orbs as a way to remember God is present.

- ✦ Cut apart the strips on **GN 3** and give one to each child.
- ✦ Have the children roll the strips around a pencil to make a tube and place the paper tube inside a balloon.
- ✦ Help the children inflate their balloon and knot the end.
- ✦ Cover the workspace with newspaper or plastic.
- ✦ Pour liquid starch into bowls.
- ✦ Have the children open the embroidery floss and dip it in starch. Make sure the floss is completely covered with starch.
- ✦ Help the children tie one end of the floss around the knot on the balloon.
- ✦ Show them how to wind the floss around the balloon, crossing the floss in many directions.
- ✦ When the children have covered the balloon with floss, the orb is ready to dry.
- ✦ Place the orbs on waxed paper to dry until the next session or use hair dryers to dry the orbs faster. Make sure to monitor the heat of the hair dryer.
- ✦ When the floss is thoroughly dry, cut a small slit in the balloon or pop it with a pin and carefully remove the balloon.
- ✦ Make sure the paper comes out of the popped balloon and is unwrapped inside the orb so it can be read. If it comes out with the balloon, tuck it back in the orb.

Encourage the children to give the orbs to their parents or care givers to hang as a reminder of God's presence.

GN 4 Solution:



Extra Activity

Remind the children that Elijah needed to pay attention to hear God's voice. Hand out copies of **GN 4** and have the children color in all the squares with even numbers. Ask the children to read together what they have found.



LOVING AND SERVING GOD

Ask the children to help clean the space.

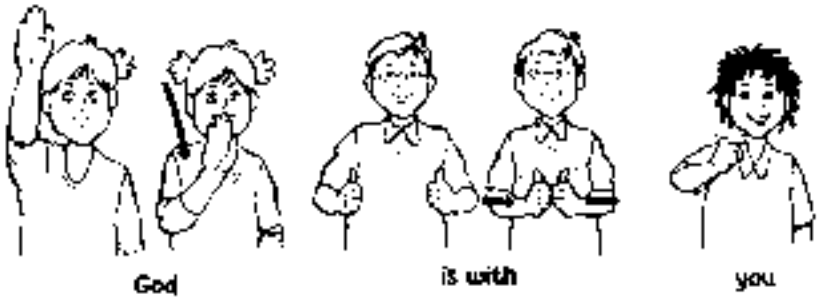
Gather everyone in a circle. Remind the children that God is with them through moments of fear and that they can pray to God to share what they are feeling. Just like with Elijah, God is listening. Sing “Our God, Fills Us with Love and Joy”—**SCM 25**—as a reminder of God’s presence and love.

Tell the children that today’s sending will be done in silence. Teach the children the phrase “God is with you” and the movements that are shown below. One by one, have the children share this sending with the child on their right. After the sending has been passed around the circle in silence, everyone will repeat the movement one last time and then say, “Amen.”

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).



Lie down and rest.
Count to 10.

Wave blue and red
streamers and stomp
feet. Continue until
everyone arrives.

Rest in a Chair.
Count to 10.

Eat 5 crackers and
drink water.

Run away

Angels

Messenger

Elijah

Mountain

Cave

Bush

Afraid

Wake up

Wind

Fire

Earthquake

Whisper

Prayer

Listen to God.

Listen to God.

Listen to God.

Listen to God.

Listen to God.

Listen to God.

Listen to God.

1	7	3	7	9	1	7	7	1	5	3	9	9	1	1	9	1	5	9	1	1	5	3	5	3	1	7	3	5	3	5	1	
3	5	8	1	5	3	6	3	2	4	6	5	2	8	8	4	2	3	4	6	2	7	4	7	1	6	1	3	5	6	1	3	
9	1	6	3	7	5	2	5	8	1	5	3	1	7	6	5	7	8	1	1	3	5	8	4	9	4	9	5	4	9	4	5	
3	5	8	7	7	9	4	7	1	2	8	5	9	3	2	3	9	5	6	8	7	1	2	8	3	8	3	7	3	8	3	7	
9	3	6	5	3	7	2	1	5	3	1	2	5	1	4	5	3	5	4	7	5	3	6	3	6	8	9	3	6	8	9	3	
5	7	2	1	5	1	2	3	9	1	5	4	9	3	8	9	1	9	2	5	3	7	4	1	4	2	5	1	4	2	5	1	
3	5	4	8	2	5	6	7	8	4	6	7	5	1	2	3	5	7	2	8	4	9	8	7	5	6	5	3	6	5	3		
7	3	1	5	3	7	1	3	7	3	5	9	3	5	7	3	7	9	5	1	3	3	5	3	1	7	1	7	1	7	1	7	
2	4	8	7	4	6	3	9	8	4	6	1	5	3	9	6	8	3	1	5	4	6	1	3	8	2	8	1	3	8	2	8	1
4	9	1	2	3	9	6	1	2	9	5	6	3	7	2	3	5	2	9	2	5	9	4	7	2	5	3	6	2	5	3	6	
6	8	5	6	3	9	6	5	6	1	3	2	5	5	4	5	3	1	3	8	5	7	8	3	6	9	7	8	6	9	7	8	
4	3	7	4	5	3	4	1	8	2	4	3	9	3	8	1	6	8	1	6	3	5	2	1	4	3	9	4	3	9	4	4	
2	1	5	8	1	9	8	7	6	9	6	7	5	1	4	7	5	2	3	8	5	9	4	9	8	3	5	4	3	5	4	4	
6	7	1	5	4	2	1	3	2	3	5	8	9	5	7	2	8	4	5	1	6	4	5	7	2	6	2	7	6	2	7	7	
9	3	5	7	1	5	3	9	3	5	7	1	5	1	3	7	9	3	5	9	3	7	1	3	9	2	7	1	3	9	2	7	1

