



God Proclaims Jubilee

Goal: To celebrate God's call to all of 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

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

basic supplies
(see p. vii)

audio stories (optional)
(see p. vii)

internet-connected
device

cloth

candle

paper towel tubes

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

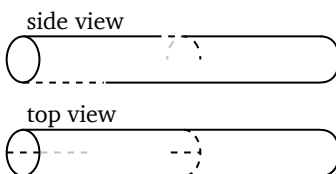
Responding

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 Activity

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. Invite three volunteers to practice reading today’s Scripture passages. Suggest that one or two lead today’s singing.

Show **SCM 7a**. Explain that it is a ram’s horn trumpet, called a *shofar*, that was used in the time of Moses. Tell the children that they will make a shofar. Give each child a paper towel tube. Show them how to pinch and cut about half way through the circumference of the top of the tube at the center (see sidebar) and cut a 1" length in toward the end from the center cut forming a “T.” Then cut about a 3" length at the bottom of the tube on the side with the “T” cut. Fold the tube at the “T” and tape. Overlap the 3" lengths, forming a cone at the end of the tube, and tape it. Encourage the children to practice buzzing their lips through the cone end to make a noise.

While they make their shofars, 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.

Singing

B SD

Play and sing “All Creation God Made”—**SCM 14**. Encourage the children to use their shofars to accompany the song. Then have the children set aside the shofars until “Hearing the Story.”

B *Children can be distracted by objects—ordinary items and items that are not usually present. Giving children the choice of putting items away first helps gain buy-in to better behavior. Removal of distracting items becomes necessary if children fail to willingly put them away.*

Praying

Turn on the candle reminding everyone of God's presence with you. 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 L

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

- The Hebrews were slaves in Egypt.
- God sent Moses to free the people from 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 LD L

Invite a volunteer to open the Bible to Leviticus 25. Invite the three volunteers to read Leviticus 25:1-12, 25-28, and 35-42. Conclude by saying, "Word of wisdom, Word of grace," and prompt the children to say, "Thanks be to God." Place the open Bible in the worship space.

Practice the call and response in the story:

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

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**, a retelling of the story, or use the story audio.



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.



Reflecting on God’s Grace

LD C

Distribute copies of **GN 1**, pencils, and highlighter markers or crayons. Call attention to the key at the top of the page. In the key, have the children do the appropriate actions: in the first line, circle the words, “sabbath” and “jubilee”; in the second line, highlight the words “when” and “observed”; in the third line, draw a star next to the word “happens”; and in the fourth line, highlight the words “who benefits.”

Invite the children to work in pairs or individually to mark the Leviticus passage according to the key on the sheet. After some time, reconvene and have the children share what they found in Leviticus 25. Then engage the children in conversation using the following questions:

- Why do you think God wants people to rest?
- Why do you think God would want us to let the land rest?
- Why do you think God would want the slaves to be freed?
- Where do you see God’s grace in this story?

Singing

M MS

Give God an offering of music. Play and sing “God Gives Us a Gift (Dios nos da un regalo)”—**SCM 23**. Note that the song is in English and Spanish. Take time to listen and enjoy the words in both languages. Invite children to play their shofars and dance along to the music. Turn off the candle.

RESPONDING IN GRATITUDE

Select activities appropriate for your group and the time available.

Claiming God’s Grace

M MS

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?



- T *Washing hands can take time! Waiting in line for the sink may make some children anxious. Devise a routine for your group so they know what to expect. Use a song, movement poem, or physical activity to match the time required.*



Celebrating God's Grace

FA

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.



Offering God's Grace

LG

Remind the children that *sabbath* is a time to rest. Ask the children to think about who works hard in their families. Ask if they have ever heard the person they thought of say they could use a rest. Suggest that one way to help their families is offering sabbath time together.

Brainstorm family sabbath time activities such as: play a game together, go for a walk, read a book aloud, do a service project, and so forth. Record their ideas on newsprint.

Give each child five large craft sticks. Encourage the children to write or draw a sabbath idea that their families would enjoy on each craft stick. Provide markers and other available craft supplies to decorate the sticks.

When the children have finished, encourage them to take home their sabbath sticks and tell their families about sabbath time. Tell them to use the sabbath sticks to make an offering of sabbath to their families. Suggest that family members take turns drawing a stick and doing the activity together to experience sabbath time.



GN 2 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, where they can download coloring pages, *Grace Sightings*, audio stories, and songs (see p. vii).

Extra Activity

Hand out copies of **GN 2** 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 have?"

LOVING AND SERVING GOD



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**. Invite the children to play their shofars to punctuate each line of the song.

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 by saying to each one, "(Name), go in peace and take time to rest."

KEY

Circle the words: “sabbath” and “jubilee”

Highlight in one color: words that tell when sabbath or jubilee is to be observed

Draw stars: by what happens during sabbath or jubilee

Highlight in a different color: who benefits from sabbath or jubilee

Leviticus 25

¹The Lord spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai, saying:

²Speak to the people of Israel and say to them: When you enter the land that I am giving you, the land shall observe a sabbath for the Lord.

³Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard, and gather in their yield;

⁴but in the seventh year there shall be a sabbath of complete rest for the land, a sabbath for the Lord: you shall not sow your field or prune your vineyard.

⁵You shall not reap the aftergrowth of your harvest or gather the grapes of your unpruned vine: it shall be a year of complete rest for the land.

⁶You may eat what the land yields during its sabbath—you, your male and female slaves, your hired and your bound laborers who live with you;

⁷for your livestock also, and for the wild animals in your land all its yield shall be for food.

⁸You shall count off seven weeks of years, seven times seven years, so that the period of seven weeks of years gives forty-nine years.

⁹Then you shall have the trumpet sounded loud; on the tenth day of the seventh month—on the day of atonement—you shall have the trumpet sounded throughout all your land.

¹⁰And you shall hallow the fiftieth year and you shall proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you: you shall return, every one of you, to your property and every one of you to your family.

¹¹That fiftieth year shall be a jubilee for you: you shall not sow, or reap the aftergrowth, or harvest the unpruned vines.

¹²For it is a jubilee; it shall be holy to you: you shall eat only what the field itself produces.

²⁵If anyone of your kin falls into difficulty and sells a piece of property, then the next of kin shall come and redeem what the relative has sold.

²⁶If the person has no one to redeem it, but then prospers and finds sufficient means to do so,

²⁷the years since its sale shall be computed and the difference shall be refunded to the person to whom it was sold, and the property shall be returned.

²⁸But if there are not sufficient means to recover it, what was sold shall remain with the purchaser until the year of jubilee; in the jubilee it shall be released, and the property shall be returned.

³⁵If any of your kin fall into difficulty and become dependent on you, you shall support them; they shall live with you as though resident aliens.

³⁶Do not take interest in advance or otherwise make a profit from them, but fear your God; let them live with you.

³⁷You shall not lend them your money at interest taken in advance, or provide them food at a profit.

³⁸I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to give you the land of Canaan, to be your God.

³⁹If any who are dependent on you become so impoverished that they sell themselves to you, you shall not make them serve as slaves.

⁴⁰They shall remain with you as hired or bound laborers. They shall serve with you until the year of the jubilee.

⁴¹Then they and their children with them shall be free from your authority; they shall go back to their own family and return to their ancestral property.

⁴²For they are my servants, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt; they shall not be sold as slaves are sold.

