



# Martha and Mary

**Goal: To express gratitude for God's love by putting God first in our lives.**

## RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

### . . . In Luke 10:38-42

Scripture tells us that Martha was bothered that she was doing so much to prepare for Jesus' visit, to be hospitable, but Jesus says she is distracted from that which truly matters—listening to him, as Mary has chosen. Often the two sisters are portrayed as in a competition, with a winner declared by Jesus. This is not the case. Both are loved by Jesus. The tone of Jesus' voice is tender and familiar with Martha as he repeats her name, gently directing her attention to what is divine and not temporal. Jesus is not condemning Martha or her activity, or all those who serve, or hospitable people to follow, but he is commending Mary and her actions, and those who desire to hear the Word of God. Listening to Jesus is the good thing or the “better part” (Luke 10:42).

What is the grace moment in this story? There are two. One is when Jesus speaks to Martha with such affection. There is grace in his voice and demeanor. One can almost imagine Jesus gently taking the serving tray out of her hands, guiding her to the chair next to his. This is grace—a moment of pause and redirection, offering Martha the better part as well. The other revelation of grace is layered into this moment with Martha. It is the acknowledgment that taking time and paying attention to God's Word is worthy, and not just worthwhile, but to be praised. It is what gives sustenance to be able to serve in Christ's name. In this “grace upon grace” moment, both women are seen and valued by Jesus. Grace is given. Thanks be to God!

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

Children today are busy, as are their parents. They are pulled in many directions with much to compete for their time and attention. Games, meets, lessons, practices, reports, and projects are all important. How does church or time with God not become just one more item on the agenda?

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

The children in your classroom, and the parents or caregivers who bring them there, are the ones who desire to sit at Jesus' feet or have felt the gentle hand upon their shoulder reminding them of the good thing, the better part. Affirm and encourage them. See and value them. Time with Jesus—on Sunday mornings and through our week—is what nourishes and sustains us as disciples of Christ.

*O God, help me commit to putting you first each day. Amen.*



## Supplies

### Music & Melodies

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

### Stories, Colors & More (SCM) i–iv, 10, 19, 23

basic supplies  
(see p. vii)

audio stories (optional)  
(see p. vii)

internet-connected  
device

white candle

white cloth

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

## Responding

### Claiming

for each child: clear container with lid such as baby food jar, 3 marbles, 3–4 small pebbles or pea gravel;  
to share: sand, bowls, spoons

### Celebrating

snack items

### Praying

copies of **GN 2**

### Extra

copies of **GN 3**

## GATHERING IN GOD’S GRACE

Before the children arrive, post **SCM i–ii**, “Your Visual Schedule.” Cut out and glue the arrow marker on a clothespin. Use the 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 “Celebrating God’s Grace” require more prep.

### Welcoming and Preparing LD

Play “Come into God’s Presence” as children arrive. Greet the children with the words “Christ is risen!” Prompt them to say, “He is risen indeed.” Welcome them to the fourth Sunday of the Easter season.

Invite the children to prepare for Easter worship, telling the children that Easter is not just a day; it’s a season. Wonder what the group could add to the worship table to signify the Easter season.

Ask them to include a Bible and a white cloth, the color for Easter. Place a white candle, representing the light of Christ.

Ask some children to help prepare today’s “Responding in Gratitude” activities. Suggest that one or two prepare to lead today’s singing. Ask for one or two volunteers to practice reading the Scripture passage.

Wonder together who has helped prepare today. Ask who prepared the worship space, today’s activities, singing, and or the Scripture reading. Suggest that there are many ways the children have shared their gifts. When they have finished, say, “Let us prepare to listen to what God has to say to us today.”

### Singing

Help the children settle into praying time by quietly singing “Come into God’s Presence”—**SCM 19**.

### Praying T C

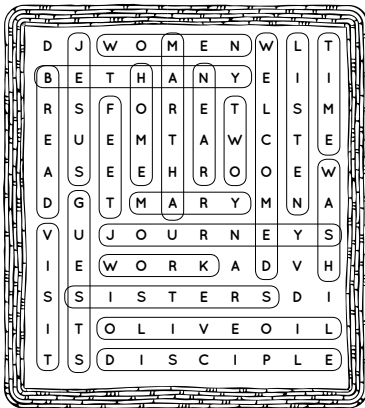
Turn on the candle on the worship table. Remind the group that candles were extinguished when we read about Jesus’ death. This candle is lit to remind us that Jesus lives and is with us always. Invite the children to repeat after you as you pray the following echo prayer.

Dear God, /  
thank you for your presence with us. /  
Thank you for seeing each of us /  
as special and worthy. /  
Help us pay attention to your word to us today. /  
Amen. /



**T** *The best way to cope with transitions is to be prepared and know what is coming. Help the children know the plan for the session and identify times of transition in advance.*

GN 1 Solution:



### Preparing to Hear the Story

**F B C LD**

Give the children a copy of **GN 1** and invite them to complete the word search about today's story. As the children work, randomly distract and interrupt some of the children. Allow others to complete the puzzle. Making sure not all have completed the puzzle, end the activity and engage the children in conversation using the following questions.

- Who completed the word search puzzle? Why or why not?
- How did it feel to be distracted or interrupted?
- When are times in our lives when things get in the way of doing something important?
- What do you think Jesus would say is the most important thing to do?

Tell the children that they will hear about two sisters spending time with Jesus.



### Hearing the Story

**M L T**

Invite a child to find Luke 10 in the Bible. Have one or two volunteers read Luke 10:38–42. Conclude by saying, “Word of wisdom, Word of grace,” and prompt the children to say, “Thanks be to God.” Place the open Bible on the worship table.

Invite the children to be like Martha and pantomime actions preparing for Jesus' visit—scurrying about sweeping, preparing food, cleaning, and so forth—as they listen to you read the story again from **SCM 10** or replay the story audio. When you get to Jesus' words, “Martha, my dear Martha,” invite the children to come sit by you for the rest of the story.

### Reflecting on God's Grace

**C**

After the story, encourage conversation using the following questions.

- Was it difficult to pay attention to the story while you were moving about?
- What are things that you can do to pay attention to Jesus?

Brainstorm ways that they can spend time with God, particularly other than church time. Jot the ideas on newsprint.

### Singing

Play, listen, clap, and dance to “I'm Gonna Live So God Can Use Me”—**SCM 23**. Turn off the candle.



## RESPONDING IN GRATITUDE

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

**TD** *For children who have tactile sensitivities, stimulations that most people do not particularly notice, or at least are not bothered by, could cause reactions that may be interpreted as bad behaviors. Be aware of activities involving tactile materials such as sand and glitter.*



### Claiming God's Grace

**A B L T TD**

Remind the children that Jesus told Martha that it was important to spend time with him. Putting God first in our lives isn't always easy when we have so many things to do. Tell the children that they are going to do an experiment that illustrates the importance of putting God first.

Give each child a baby food jar with a lid and a large stone that fits in the jar to represent God. Have them put the stone in their jar. Then give each child three or four small stones and have them add them to the container. Finally, have the children fill their containers with sand and put on the lids. Ask:

- ▾ What happened?
- ▾ How does everything fit in the container?

Instruct the children to empty the contents of their containers into a bowl. Have them pick out the large and small stones, leaving sand in the bowl. Give them spoons and have them put the sand in their containers first. Then have them put in the small stones, finally the large stone, and then the lid back on. Ask:

- ▾ What happened?
- ▾ Why do you think everything fit the first time but not now?

Have them empty the contents again, and fill their containers again with the large stone first, then the small stones, and finally the sand and lids. It should all fit again.

Tell the children that the container is like our lives, and the large stone represents those things that should be the first things, the most important things in our lives—God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. If we put God first, then everything else fits just fine. The small stones represent those things like family and friends, which come next. The sand is all the little stuff that we fill our lives with. If we start with those things, then the important things don't fit. Ask:

- ▾ What ideas do you have to put God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit first in your life?

Encourage the children to take home their containers and show their families how important it is to put God first in our lives.



### Celebrating God's Grace

F LG B MS C FA

Remind the children that Martha and Mary both loved Jesus and showed their devotion to him in different ways. Tell the children that they will have an opportunity to serve one another. Invite the children to choose if they would like to prepare a snack for the group or prepare a skit or puppet show retelling the story for the group.

After allowing time to prepare the snack and skit, bring the group together. Have the children share their skit and enjoy the snack that was prepared. Celebrate the importance of sharing all our gifts with God and one another.

**LG** *Allow children to make choices as they learn the concepts of responsibility and consequences of making decisions. Opportunities to make decisions can lead to better confidence.*

### Praying God's Grace

LD VI

Acknowledge that we all have busy days. Ask the kinds of things the children do each day (*sleeping, eating, doing sports, doing homework, spending time with family or friends, and so forth*). If it is not mentioned, remind the children that spending time with God is also important.

Hand out copies of **GN 2** and colored pencils or markers. Ask a volunteer to read the title. Let the children choose colors to represent the items that are listed. Have the children set their charts aside.

As a group, fill out one chart together. Point out that there are twenty-four hours in each day (represented by each block). Say to the children, "I know we all sleep each day." Ask the children to suggest the number of hours they sleep. On your chart, fill in an average number for each day. This gives a good starting point to determine the rest of the time. Continue with other activities listed until each day's blocks are filled in.

Ask the children how the amount of time they spend with God compares to the time they spend doing everything else. Brainstorm some ideas about how to spend more time with God. Refer to the newsprint from "Reflecting on God's Word" for ideas to add to the list.

Challenge the children to take home their charts and fill them in during the week, making sure to put God first as much as possible. Suggest that as they fill out the chart each day, saying a prayer is one way to keep God first.

Assure the children that there is no right or wrong answer for this chart. They may not do some of the activities, and that is fine as well.



**GN 3 Solution:**

SISTERS  
PREPARE  
JESUS  
BETHANY  
FOOD  
VISIT  
FRIENDS  
TOGETHER  
TALK  
LISTEN  
MARY  
PRESENCE  
WORK  
TIME  
CONVERSATION  
MARTHA  
GUESTS  
WELCOME

Spending time with God.



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).

**Extra Activity**



Hand out copies of **GN 3**. Read aloud the question at the bottom of the page. Allow time for the children to unscramble the words. Tell the children to write the circled letters in order in the spaces below. When all have finished, read the solution and ask how the words were reflected in today’s story.

**LOVING AND SERVING GOD**

Invite the children to gather and lead them in cleaning up the worship space.

Sing “I’m Gonna Live So God Can Use Me”—**SCM 23**. Invite the children to come up with movements for live, work, pray, and sing. Ask: What other things related to the story can we do so that God can use us in God’s work? Try to add stanzas to the song using the words that the children come up with. Some words could be “listen” and “serve.”

Encourage the children to find times to listen to God’s Word and to do God’s work during the week.

Send each child with a blessing: “(Name), God has given you amazing gifts. Be blessed, and be a blessing to others.”

**Word Bank**

BETHANY

BREAD

DISCIPLE

FEET

GUESTS

HOME

JESUS

JOURNEYS

LISTEN

MARTHA

MARY

NEAR

OLIVE OIL

SISTERS

TIME

TWO

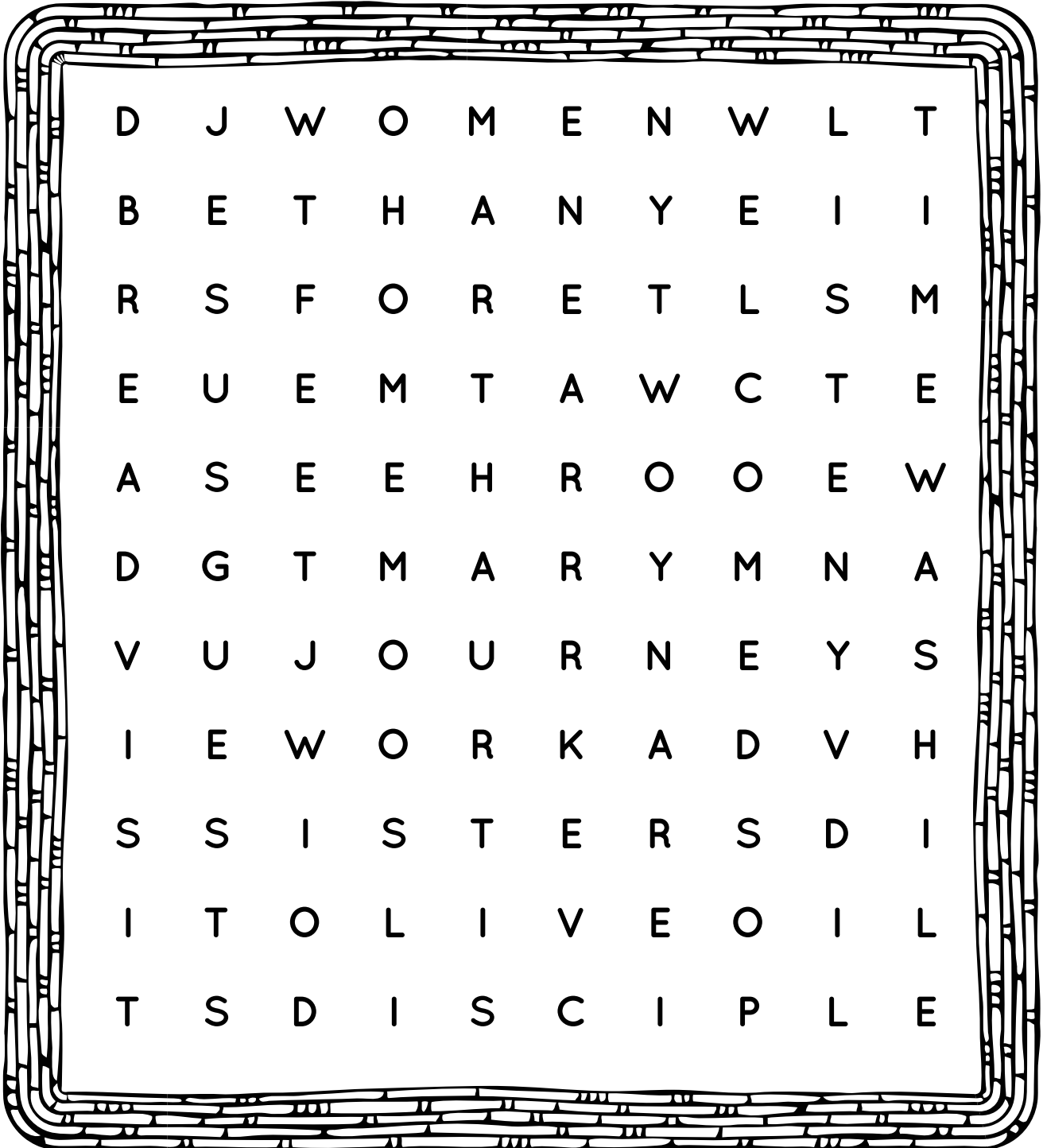
VISIT

WASH

WELCOMED

WOMEN

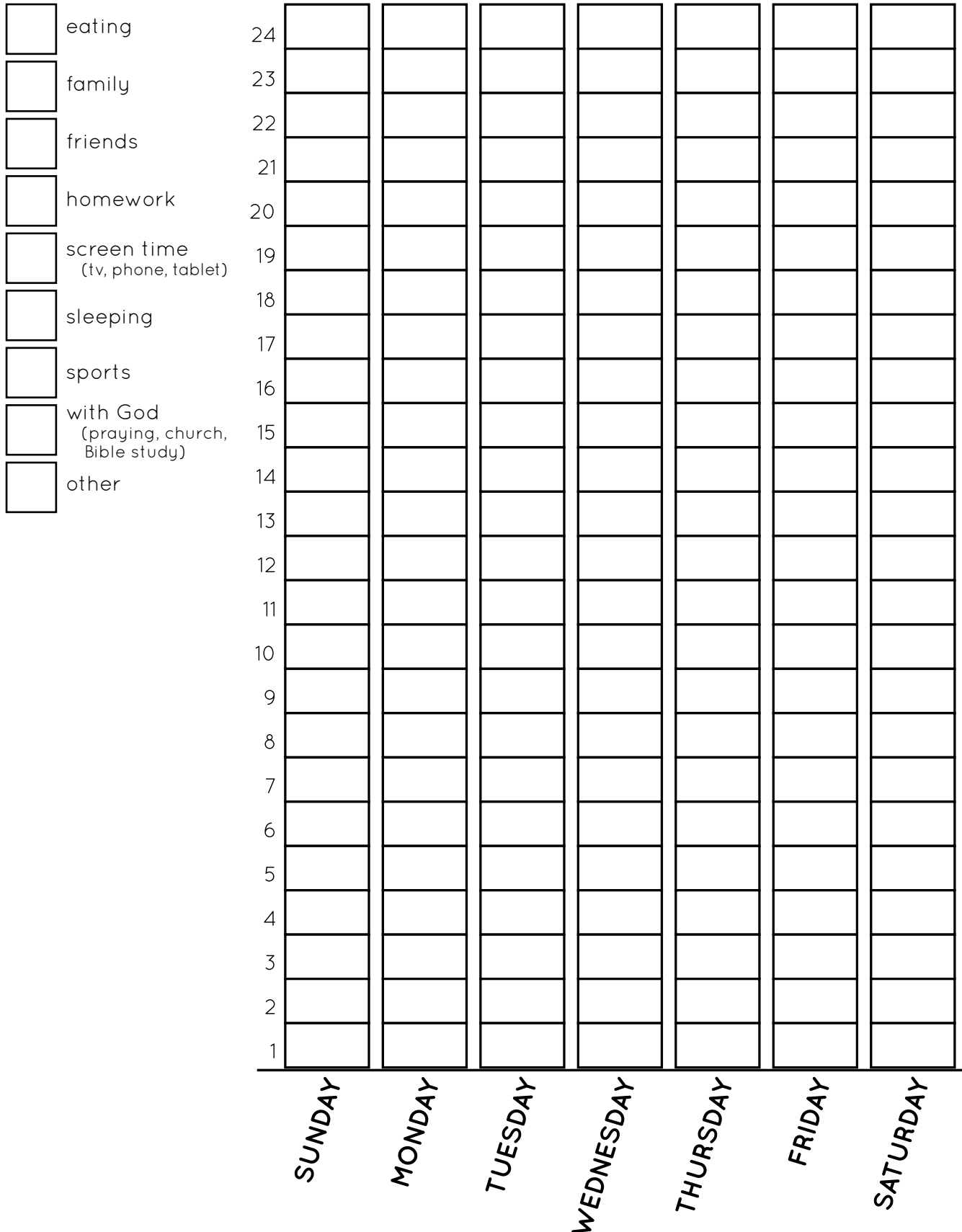
WORK







# How Do You Spend Your Time?





1. ITSSRSE

\_\_\_\_\_

2. ERPRPAE

○ \_\_\_\_\_

3. SUJES

— ○ \_\_\_\_\_

4. THNYABE

\_\_\_\_\_ ○ \_\_\_\_\_

5. ODFO

\_\_\_\_\_ ○ \_\_\_\_\_

6. SIVTI

— ○ \_\_\_\_\_

7. FSDNRIE

\_\_\_\_\_ ○ \_\_\_\_\_

8. GTHETOER

\_\_\_\_\_ ○ \_\_\_\_\_

9. KLAT

○ \_\_\_\_\_

10. STLIEN

— ○ \_\_\_\_\_

11. ARMY

○ \_\_\_\_\_

12. RESPENEC

\_\_\_\_\_ ○ \_\_\_\_\_

13. ORWK

○ \_\_\_\_\_

14. MTEI

— ○ \_\_\_\_\_

15. TIONVECORNAS

\_\_\_\_\_ ○ \_\_\_\_\_

16. MTHRAA

\_\_\_\_\_ ○ \_\_\_\_\_

17. ESTSUG

○ \_\_\_\_\_

18. WLEMCOE

\_\_\_\_\_ ○ \_\_\_\_\_

19. SPDIICPELS

○ \_\_\_\_\_

How do we express gratitude for God's grace?

\_\_\_\_\_

