



Forgiveness

Goal: To express gratitude for God's love and forgiveness.

RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

. . . In Luke 7:36-50

While Jesus was having a meal with religious leaders, a “woman from the city, a sinner” (v. 37, CEB) anointed Jesus’ feet with her tears and ointment. This action drew criticism from the leaders, who disapproved of the woman. However, Jesus’ story of the two debtors with unequal debts made it clear that the one to whom little is forgiven loves little. The woman’s “many sins have been forgiven; so she has shown great love” (v. 47, CEB). Jesus told her, “Your faith has saved you. Go in peace” (v. 50, CEB).

Jesus extended pure grace to the woman. She knew she owed much to God and fell short of God’s will. However, in Jesus, she received forgiveness for all she had done. In Jesus’ reconciling grace, a new future and way of living opened. No wonder she was overcome by love and worshiped Jesus! Grace leads to gratitude. The woman’s outpouring of worship emerged from her forgiveness and a love she did not deserve.

Jesus praised the faith of the woman and told her to go in peace. We can have peace in our lives when sin is forgiven. We can live gratefully as those who receive God’s grace in Jesus Christ.

. . . In Your Children’s Experiences

Children are growing in their faith in many ways, some visible to you and others hidden. Think about the many places where children’s expressions of gratitude to God can be expressed. Expressions can be verbal, such as prayers, or action oriented in response to God’s love and forgiveness. The children may be able to name the ways they can affirm God’s love in their lives.

. . . In Your Relationships with the Children

Table blessings are one way families teach their children about being grateful to God for “health and strength and daily bread.” We also say blessings when we share the Lord’s Supper in worship. Helping children learn how to express gratitude to God, to worship spontaneously, is teaching them a spiritual practice that will keep them attuned to God’s graceful presence in their lives.

O God, fill my heart with gratitude for your priceless gifts of grace and forgiveness. Amen.



Supplies

Music & Melodies

bit.ly/GGGMusicMelodies

Stories, Colors & More (SCM) i–iv, 9, 19, 28

basic supplies
(see p. vii)

audio stories (optional)
(see p. vii)

internet-connected
device

white candle

white cloth

cotton balls

olive oil

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

Responding

Claiming

olive oil, essential oil
(optional), small jars
with lids, glitter glue or
paint pens, fabric

Praying

worship bulletins

Extra

copies of **GN 2**

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 “Praying God’s Grace” require more prep.

Welcoming and Preparing



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 third Sunday of the Easter season.

Invite the children to prepare the space 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.

Singing

Play “Come into God’s Presence”—**SCM 19**—to celebrate how we live in the presence of God. Ask the children to listen for the phrases: “Alleluia,” “Jesus is Lord,” “worthy the Lamb,” and “glory to God.”

Ask the children what movements they can think of that can express these phrases. Give examples like raising their hands up high for “Alleluia” or bowing down for “Jesus is Lord,” if necessary. Practice the movements and then play the song again so that they can sing and move to the music.

Praying



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 the gift of Jesus. /
Thank you for the gift of forgiveness. /
May we give you thanks every day! /
Amen. /



Seeing where the story is found in the Bible reinforces the importance of this book for the church.



Preparing to Hear the Story

C F

Engage the children in conversation about forgiveness.

- Think of a time when you have been forgiven for doing something wrong. Was it for something big or for some small thing?
- How did you feel when you were forgiven for the big thing?

Tell the children that they are going to hear a story, and a story within a story, about forgiveness. Explain that in Jesus' time, women and men treated each other differently than they do today. Women didn't speak to men in public, and a woman would never touch a man she didn't know. Invite the children to listen for what the woman does and why she does it.

Hearing the Story

LD L

Invite a child to find Luke 7 in the Bible. Have one or two volunteers read Luke 7:36-50. 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.

Hand out copies of **GN 1** and pencils. Invite the children to work on the sheet as you read the story again from **SCM 9** or listen to the story audio. Explain that they will write a "W" or an "S" in front of each statement indicating the person it describes, the woman or Simon. When the story has concluded, review the answers the children have written. There are a couple of statements that could be either answer. Listen to the children's reasoning.

Reflecting on God's Grace

Explain that Simon knew that the woman had done many things that were wrong. Simon believed that if Jesus were a prophet, as some people said he was, then Jesus would know the woman was a sinner and he would not want her to touch him.

Jesus taught Simon that because the woman was able to receive forgiveness for a lot of sin, she responded in kind by showing much gratitude and love. Jesus told Simon that when people think they are too good to ask for forgiveness, they don't feel God's love and forgiveness.

Ask the children what the woman did and why she did it. (*The woman washed and anointed Jesus feet to show her gratitude for forgiveness.*) Wonder together what we do to show gratitude for forgiveness. Wonder what we learned about forgiveness and gratitude from the story. Ask the children, "When do you hear about forgiveness and gratitude in church?"



Singing

Celebrate God’s forgiveness by singing “God Loves You, and I Love You (Dios te ama y yo te amo)”—**SCM 28**.

Turn off the candle.

T *Transition times vary, so plan accordingly. Clean up may only require a short warning while hand washing may require more warning and time. Use a song or short activity to signal the change.*

RESPONDING IN GRATITUDE

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



Claiming God’s Grace

TD FM

Wonder with the children about anointing. Recall that the woman anointed Jesus with oil. Explain, if necessary, that anointing is an act of blessing or naming something as sacred or holy. Suggest that even though the woman anointed Jesus with oil, blessing him and acknowledging that he was holy, Jesus also “anointed” the woman. He did not anoint her with oil, but with the blessing of forgiveness.

Tell the children they will decorate small jars to hold oil. Invite them to decorate jars to hold their anointing oil. Encourage them to use paint pens to decorate or apply glitter glue with a light touch so that it will dry before they leave.

When the jars are dry, pour a small amount of oil in each one. Mark the inside of each jar lid with the child’s name.

To cover the lids, invite the children to trace the lid shape on the back of a piece of fabric. Cut the circle out and secure it on the closed jar with glue.

Talk with the children about the use of the oil. They can use it for blessing another person, for offering forgiveness, or for noticing when someone is acting like Jesus by being loving and forgiving. Suggest that they use a cotton ball to dab just a small amount of oil on the back of someone’s hand. Wonder together what words they might want to say.

F *Sometimes children protest that they’re being treated unfairly when actually it may only be that they’re not getting what they want. When self-interest overrides actually trying to be fair, ask them to flip the situation and look at it from the other person’s perspective.*

If using essential oils, add only a small amount to the olive oil.



Celebrating God's Grace

F LG A B MS T SD

Tell the children that sometimes when we do something wrong, we feel bad about our actions. We may feel like we are frozen and can't even move, not knowing what to do or how to make a situation better. When we are forgiven, we feel better and feel like we can move again.

Play a game to help the children experience these feelings. You will need an open area where the children can walk around briskly.

Ask a volunteer to be the "freezer" and another to be the "forgiver." When the freezer touches another player, they need to stop where they are. Only the forgiver can let people move again by putting his or her hand on the person's shoulder and saying, "You are forgiven."

Choose either to play for the length of a song or for a designated amount of time. Play a few rounds, asking for different volunteers to be the freezer and the forgiver.

Ask:

- ▼ How did it feel to be frozen?
- ▼ How did it feel to be the forgiver?
- ▼ How did it feel when you heard the words, "You are forgiven."?

Explain that when we forgive, we let go of feeling bad and are able to move on with our lives.



Praying God's Grace

LD C

Remind the children that, in a worship service, people in the congregation confess what they have done wrong and are assured of God's forgiveness. Distribute worship bulletins and find where that occurs in the service.

Wonder how the story about Jesus and the woman helps us understand that God forgives us. Wonder how we might express our gratitude to God as the woman did.

If a congregational response follows the assurance of pardon or forgiveness, practice saying or singing it.

Challenge the children to work together to write a confession of sin and assurance of God's forgiveness for a future worship service. They could use the confession and pardon in the bulletin as a model.

Perhaps the pastor or a worship leader could invite the children to lead the confession of sin during a future worship service. If so, ask the pastor to help prepare the children for worship leadership.

Extra Activity

Explain that when we need forgiveness, we don't feel like everything is right. Hand out copies of **GN 2** and pencils. Tell the children that the things in the second picture aren't all right; in fact, there are ten things that are different. Challenge them to find the differences.

If the children are not regularly in worship for the prayer of confession and forgiveness of sins, arrange for them to stay for that time or take them to the sanctuary for it.

GN 2 Solution:

dog, empty bowl, flame, mustache, sandals, shirt, short bowl, sleeve, wide jar, window bars



LOVING AND SERVING GOD

TD

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

Sing “God Loves You, and I Love You (Dios te ama y yo te amo)” — **SCM 28.**

Encourage the children to remember, as they go about their activities this week, to show their gratitude for God’s forgiveness.

Explain that today you are going to anoint those who are willing with the sign of the cross to show that they are forgiven by God. (Allow the children to choose whether they will be anointed, and let them know that either way, they remain forgiven by God.)

Pour a bit of oil on a cotton ball. Offer to anoint the children by dabbing a bit of oil on the backs of their hands. Make the sign of the cross with oil on each person’s hands, blessing them by saying, “(Name), share God’s grace with others.”

When you have finished, close with the following prayer or one of your own choosing.

Gracious God, thank you for the gift of your son, Jesus, to show us what forgiveness looks like. May we show our gratitude for such a blessing. Amen.



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).

Simon



Woman



Kissed Jesus

Anointed Jesus' feet with perfume

Had nothing to say

Showed love and devotion for Jesus

Was upset at the anointing

Made mistakes

Wanted to see Jesus

Dried Jesus' feet

Knows forgiveness

Ate with Jesus

Needed to be taught a lesson

Did nothing to welcome Jesus

Cleaned Jesus' feet

Was treated unkindly

Not impressed

Unnoticed

Circle the answer:

Jesus was pleased with the woman's actions.

Jesus was not pleased with the woman's actions.



