



# Jesus Will Always Be with Us

Goal: To trust Jesus' words, "I am with you always."

## RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

### . . . In Matthew 28:16–20

Notice the description of how the disciples received Jesus. Some of them worshiped him, but some doubted. The Greek word for doubt, *distazo*, refers to standing in two places at once—believing and doubting. Some, like Thomas, needed more time or physical proof. Perhaps all of them doubted, wondering if they would be able to do all that Jesus expected of them.

Whether they were completely sure of their abilities to do what Jesus asked of them or they still had doubts or questions, they were able to stand in the place that Jesus had opened for them when he told them not to worry, because he would be with them every day. We, too, claim that promise of Easter, that Jesus is with us every day. Jesus' gracious love sustains and comforts us, leads us, helps us, and holds us.

All we can do is say thank you. Thank you, Jesus, for being with us. In gratitude, we give our deepest thanks to our constant companion.

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

It would be so interesting to act out this very brief scene with your children, asking them to take the parts of the disciples and Jesus. If you asked them to show, with their actions and their words, how they would express worship and doubt, you would have a rich basis for conversation about this story and what it might mean for their lives today. The ability to stand in the two places of worship and doubt is not a bad thing. To ask questions and express doubts is not the opposite of faith, but rather an expression of the kind of thinking required for a growing faith.

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

Be aware of the children in your group and the variety of personalities you see each Sunday. Some are very confident and love to talk. Others are quieter, more reserved. Some are quite sure about their answers to questions, and others hold back, thinking and wondering. Some are very positive, and others express doubts or concerns.

These depictions could describe the disciples that Jesus met on the mountain. As they listened to what Jesus wanted them to do, each one was thinking about how it could be accomplished. This also is true of the children in your group. Remind them that they can live and love like Jesus wants them to do, each in their own way.

*O God, give me the assurance that Jesus is present in my life and in the world. Help me live according to his promise. Amen.*



## Supplies

### Music & Melodies

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

### Stories, Colors & More (SCM) i–iv, 8, 17, 24

basic supplies

(see p. vii)

audio stories (optional)

(see p. vii)

internet-connected device

white cloth

candle

robe

## Responding

### Claiming

large appliance box

### Offering

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

### 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.

“Claiming God’s Grace” requires more prep.

### Welcoming and Preparing

**M** **MS** **A** **TD**

Play “Hallelujah! Praise Ye the Lord!”—**SCM 17**—as the children arrive. Greet the children by saying, “Christ is risen!” and prompt them to respond, “He is risen indeed!” Welcome any newcomers.

Ask the children to place a white cloth on the worship table. Note that the white cloth means the church is in the Easter season, which lasts fifty days. Invite the children to add a Bible and a candle to the table.

Invite the children to draw a mountain scene on mural paper, including grass, clouds, and the sun. Consider adding texture by providing cotton balls for the clouds and construction paper for the sun, trees, and grass.

Ask the children to make figures of people to go on the mountain. Have children draw the people on paper, color the figures, cut them out, and glue them to the mountain.

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 a volunteer to practice today’s Scripture passage.

### Singing

**MS**

Gather together. Thank the children for their help in creating the worship space.

Sing “Hallelujah! Praise Ye the Lord!”—**SCM 17**. Form two groups. Assign one group “Hallelujah!” and the other group, “Praise ye the Lord!” The groups will stand when they sing their part and sit when the other group is singing. Turn off the recording and speed up the singing, along with the standing and sitting. Repeat as you wish.

### Praying

**T**

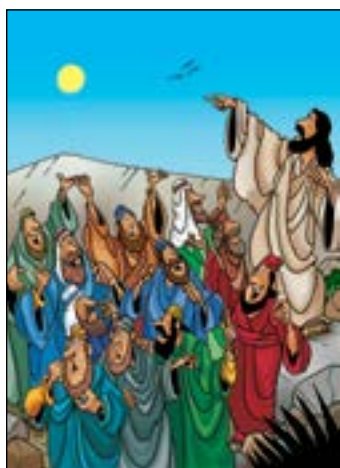
Turn on the candle as a reminder of Jesus and the light he brings into the world. Pray:

Thank you for this day, O God, that you spend with us. Thank you for Jesus, for his life and for his love. And thank you for this group, for *(say group members’ names)*. Let us feel you close to us. Help us show your grace. Amen.



### Preparing to Hear the Story C

Pretend to journey with the disciples from Jerusalem to the area of Galilee where they will meet Jesus on a mountain. If possible, take this imaginary trip outside. As you walk, point out real or imaginary things with comments such as: “Do you see those big rocks? What color are they? Over there! Is that a shepherd? How many sheep do you see? Look, children are playing in front of their homes. What do you think they are playing? Over there! It’s a camel. How many humps does it have?” After you set the stage, ask, “What do you see?” Encourage the children to add commentary, wondering why they are meeting with Jesus.



### Hearing the Story C L

Invite a child to find Matthew 28 in the Bible. Ask for a volunteer to read Matthew 28:16–20. Conclude the reading 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 center.

Invite the children to suggest different emotions they heard in the story. Invite them to use their face and bodies to show these emotions when they hear one as you read the story from **SCM 8** or listen to the story audio. It’s all right if children show different emotions. Ask them why they think the story expresses these emotions.

### Reflecting on God’s Grace C

Wonder together how to become a disciple. Share your own discipleship story—how you became a follower of Jesus (*talk about who loved and nurtured you in the faith, what you have learned by studying about Jesus*). Wonder aloud what it’s like to follow Jesus.

Invite each child to think of a one-sentence answer to this question: “What do you think was the most important thing Jesus wanted his friends and followers to know?”

Show the group the robe, and let them know that, when they put it on, they will be playing the part of Jesus.

Invite the children to take turns putting on the robe and pretending to be Jesus, telling his friends this one important thing. Encourage the children to use their faces and bodies to express how each person’s sentence makes them feel.

### Singing

Invite children to sing “Jesus Bids Us Shine”—**SCM 24**. Turn off the candle.



## RESPONDING IN GRATITUDE

Select activities appropriate for your group and the time available.



### Claiming God's Grace

B A

Create a “machine” that makes disciples. Invite the children to decorate the four sides of a large appliance box with scenes of people (biblical and modern) who are sharing God’s good news and making disciples. For example, the children might include someone reading a story from the Bible, Jesus preaching, someone praying, someone giving a hug, and so forth.

Invite the children to consider what it takes for someone to become a disciple (*God, open heart, knowing the stories of the Bible, willingness to tell others about God, caring for others*) and make a list on one side of the box. Then decide on some kind of sound the machine makes when it is working, such as buzzing, humming, or whirring. Then switch your disciple-making machine to “on.”

Invite one of the children to get into the disciple-making machine. Invite the other children to make the machine sound(s). Read the list on the side of the box while pretending to add all the necessary “ingredients.” Say, “Poof!” and have the child leave the box as a new disciple. Allow all who would like an opportunity to have a turn in the disciple-making machine. Be sure to emphasize the list of necessary things that makes a person into a disciple. Feel free to vary the list, as the gifts God gives us vary.

MS *Think about how to include children who use assistive devices.*

### Celebrating God's Grace

M MS B

Play a fun game to help remember Jesus’ command. In this adaptation of Tag, two people are “It” and are given a command to pass along to others. Simultaneously, the two “Its” try to tag players by touching them on the shoulder lightly and giving them a task to do. Once players have been tagged, they perform the task assigned until they are tagged by another “It” and given a new task.

The object of the game is for each “It” to have the entire group performing his or her assigned task at the same time.

Clear a space. Ask two volunteers to be “It.” Here are some tasks that you can assign:

- ✦ Task: Tag a player and say, “Jesus is alive—go tell somebody.”
- ✦ Task: Tag a player and say, “I baptize you in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—go and baptize others.”
- ✦ Task: Tag a player and say, “Love God and love others—go and tell somebody.”

If you have a large group, choose a proportionate number of children to be “It” and tag others. This makes the game more challenging.



Tell everyone to run freely around the cleared space and respond when they are tagged. The game will erupt in chaos as players are tagged and re-tagged. Experience what can happen if we all take Jesus' command to spread the gospel!

### Offering God's Grace



Worship services usually end with a commissioning or charge to the congregation. Jesus commissioned his disciples with a job to do and something to remember. To *commission* someone means to send them out on an important mission.

Give each child a copy of **GN 1** and have them read the commissioning sentences aloud. Tell the children to cut apart the cards and choose the commissioning sentence they like best. Form pairs. Have them practice saying their sentence to each other.

Gather the children together and invite them to take turns commissioning the group with the sentence they chose, sending one another out from this place to do the work Jesus asks us to do, and to remember the presence of the Spirit with us.

Encourage the children to give the other three commissioning sentences to three other people as words to remember and share with others.

**LD** *Look for opportunities for children to practice leadership and generosity, such as offering a blessing to one another and passing kindness on beyond Sunday worship.*

### Extra Activity

While completing the picture on **GN 2**, children will be invited to think about the words of Jesus on the mountain. Give each child a copy of **GN 2** and set out colored pencils. Ask the children to wonder what the disciples said to Jesus after he spoke to them on the mountain and fill in the speech bubbles with as many responses as they can think of. Then they can draw themselves in the open space below Jesus. Challenge them to write in the speech bubble the words they would say to Jesus.

Invite the children to practice reading their messages to the group. Encourage them to use the picture to tell family members the good news about Jesus' promise to be with us always.



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).

## LOVING AND SERVING GOD



Invite the children to help clean up the space.

Join hands in a circle, with arms crossed right over left. If everyone has their arms crossed in the same direction, the group will remain intact when each student turns outward when the prayer ends. Pray the following prayer, and let the group know when you will be turning outward:

God, you call each of us to be true disciples. Help us this week to keep our commitment to you. Give us the strength to follow in the way of Jesus. As we go into the world (*turn*), we remember that you are always with us. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

End by saying to each child, “(*Name*), go in gratitude, and share the good news that Christ is risen!”

God's blessing be upon you,  
God's love surround you,  
God's peace protect you.  
Live and love as God loves you.

God loves you. You are never alone.  
Jesus is with you. Live in his love.

Go with hope and love,  
so that all the world will see your joy.  
Go in the presence  
and peace of Jesus Christ.

Go in peace and power,  
to love and serve the Lord.  
May all you do be done in love.  
May all you love be blessed.  
May Christ's Spirit rest upon you  
and Christ's peace fill your heart.

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