



# Hear It and Do It!

Goal: To put our faith into action.

## RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

### . . . In James 1:19-27; 2:1-7

The letter of James emphasizes putting faith into action, captured in this verse: “Be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves” (1:22). If you think you can just “soak up” the word of God without expressing the word in deeds or works, you are deceiving yourself.

Then, specifically: “Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world” (1:27). True faith is helping one another. It helps those in special distress such as orphans and widows. These are vulnerable people with needs. True Christian faith reaches out to these persons—and all others—to do what is possible to help. “Doers of the word” extend the love of Jesus Christ to provide for human needs.

Our actions in helping others express our gratitude for what we have been given in Christ. Jesus gives us “grace upon grace” (John 1:16). Jesus gives us himself—grace in person. No words—or actions—can repay this grace. Instead, all our words and actions are given in the service of others in need. Gratitude upon gratitude constitutes our response!

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

We all need reminders of how important it is that what we do matches the words we speak. This week's story comes from the book of James, which is a letter he wrote to Jewish Christians. Children may need help with a visual reminder of what a letter looks like since they may be more familiar with other forms of communication, such as texts, messaging, and photos. Children in your group will be able to connect with this story about James's reminder of how they are to live as Christians through their own stories about how someone has encouraged them and supported them.

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

Use your preparation time to think about the actions you have seen with the children. The story invites them to think about how Jesus invites us to help others, welcome everyone, share food, and use kind words. When have you seen this happen with your group of children? In your time together, remind them of the things you have seen them do with and for one another. Include them by name in your prayers and say one of the gifts you see in that child for sharing God's love with the world.

*Dear Lord, open my heart to the children as I help them hear your word. Help me to model what it means to be your disciple. Amen.*



## Supplies

**Music & Melodies**  
(MM) 2023–2024

**Stories, Colors & More**  
(SCM) i–iv, 13, 24, 25

basic supplies  
(see p. vii)

story audio (see p. vii)

candle

green cloth

**SCM 13** in an envelope

throw cushions

low table

## Responding

### Celebrating

lamp, sidewalk chalk

### Praying

**SCM 13a**

### Offering

supplies for serving  
project selected

### Extra

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

## 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.

Before the session, seal **SCM 13** in an envelope, addressed to your group, and place it in the church’s mailbox (if accessible) or a mailbox in the church office.

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

### Welcoming and Preparing

**LG** **MS** **A** **B**

Play “Care Enough to Care”—**MM 27**—as the children arrive.

Greet the children by name and with the words “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.”

Invite children to help prepare the worship space. Have the children set up the space to look like a room where people would have gathered in the early church. Move chairs and provide floor pillows and cushions around a low table. Provide a Bible, a candle, and a green cloth for the table.

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

When preparations are complete, say to the children that you are expecting a letter from a church leader named James. Take a walk to the church’s mailbox or church office to retrieve the envelope you placed there.

Return to the gathering space. Invite the children to sit in a circle, using the throw cushions as seats.

### Singing

**MS**

Play “Shalom, Chaverim!”—**MM 25**; **SCM 24**. Lead the children, dancing in a circle to the song. Play it several times.

### Praying

**L**

Turn on the candle, reminding the children that the light represents Jesus the Christ and the light he brings into the world. Invite the children to repeat after you as you pray:

Loving God, /  
we are ready to hear your word. /  
We want to do your word /  
so others will know your love too. /  
Amen. /



**LG** *Look for opportunities to express generosity. Offer ways to practice leadership, such as passing out items, holding visual aids, or helping other children.*

### Preparing to Hear the Story L

Explain that the New Testament has four Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. The Gospels are the books that tell the story of Jesus. The New Testament also includes a book called Acts of the Apostles, which tells about the beginning of the church, and many letters written to churches and to people. The letters were read in homes where the people gathered to learn about Jesus and worship God. Tell the children that in the last several sessions they have heard letters from Paul and from John the Elder. Today they will hear a letter from another follower of Jesus, James.

Tell them that the letter you removed from the mailbox is very important and that you want to read it to them.

### Hearing the Story C L

Ask a volunteer to find the book of James in the Bible. Have a volunteer read James 1:19–27. Then have another volunteer read James 2:1–7. 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 table.

Tell the children they will hear the story again as you read it from **SCM 13** or use the story audio. Explain that there are parts of the letter that say, “Listen to what Jesus says” and they will respond “Hear it and do it!”

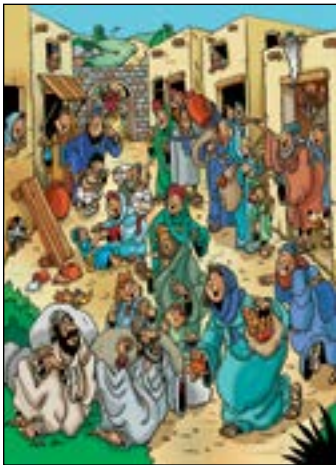
### Reflecting on God’s Grace C LG A

Wonder together what stories the children know about Jesus and what teachings he taught people. Write their suggestions in a column on the left side of a sheet of newsprint. Then go back through each story and teaching and wonder how we can “do it”! Ask the children what actions they might take, knowing what Jesus has taught. For example, the children may have listed the story of the Good Samaritan and that Jesus said we should be like the Samaritan who took care of the hurt person. An action to list in the right column of the newsprint might be to help someone who is hurt or to stand up for someone who is being bullied. Encourage the children to remember that Jesus asks us to serve other people, and we can “do it”!

### Singing

Sing “Care Enough to Care”—**MM 27; SCM 25.**

Turn off the candle.



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](http://www.pcusastore.com).



## RESPONDING IN GRATITUDE

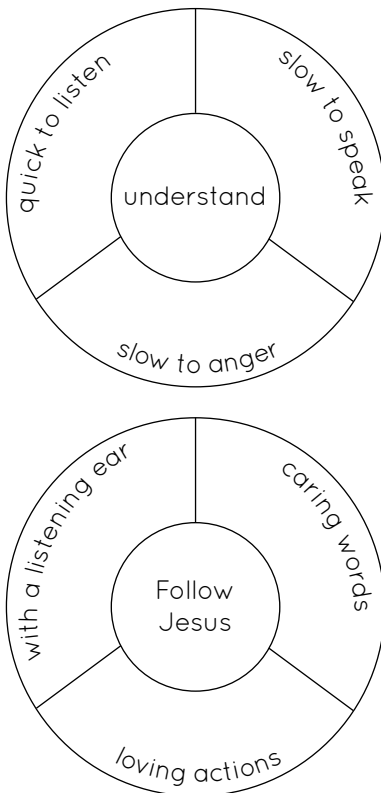
Select activities appropriate for your group and the time available.

### Claiming God's Grace

LG

Read James 1:19 aloud and ask the children to listen for three things to do (*be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger*).

Hand out paper and pencils. Give the children the following directions and assistance as needed:



- Draw a big circle and cut it out.
- Draw a small circle in the center of the larger one. Write the word *understand* in the small circle.
- Draw lines to divide the larger outside circle into three sections.
- In one section, write *quick to listen*.
- In the second section, write *slow to speak*.
- In the last section, write *slow to anger*.
- On the back, draw another small circle in the center. Write *Follow Jesus* inside it.
- Divide the larger circle on the back into thirds as well.
- In the first section, write *with a listening ear*.
- In the second section, write *caring words*.
- In the third section, write *loving actions*.
- Decorate the sections on each side.
- Punch a hole anywhere along the outside circle, about an inch from the edge. Thread yarn through the hole and tie the yarn together to make a loop.

Invite the children to take their circles home and hang them somewhere they will see them daily as a reminder that they should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger, and that they can do that with a listening ear, caring words, and loving actions.



### Celebrating God's Grace

Help the children think of ways to be doers of the word.

Use a lamp to cast shadows. Have the children work in pairs. Have the first child in each pair strike a pose. Have the second child trace the first child's shadow with sidewalk chalk on mural paper, then switch places and do it again.

Once each child has traced a shadow figure, ask them to think of what their shadow looks like it is doing and how it could be a doer of the word. They can choose to color in the figure or decorate it in any way.



If your group is large, form three small groups. Give each one a verse and let them work together to make group sculptures.

### Praying God's Grace TD

Base a reflective prayer activity on Leviticus 19:18, Matthew 22:39, and James 2:8.

Show **SCM 13a**. Invite volunteers to read each verse. Ask what all the verses have in common. Wonder together why this same verse is found in different places in the Bible.

Ask the children to name ways to act out this rule in their lives. Provide play dough for them to make sculptures that express the phrase "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Give them pieces of paper to work on. Play music while they work.

Give an opportunity for those who want to share what their sculptures represent. After each presentation, invite the group to say, "Help us to do so. Amen." Arrange the sculptures on the worship table around the candle.



### Offering God's Grace LG TD SD LD

To emphasize the importance of doing God's word, spend time in some form of service to your church community. For example:

- ▼ Using washcloths and a bucket of soapy water, wash the hard surfaces of the pews or chairs in the worship space. (Be sure to get permission from the church committee for this activity.)
- ▼ Clean up litter in the church yard or sidewalk.
- ▼ Write notes to your congregation's members who are sick and homebound.

Remind the children that even small forms of service are great in God's sight.

#### GN 1 Solution:

COMFORT	JAMES
TRYING	FOLLOW
AID	SERVE
JESUS	CARE
HELP	GOD

Hear it and do it.

### Extra Activity LD

Hand out copies of **GN 1**. To challenge older children, cover the word bank before photocopying. For even more of a challenge, black out the numbers. 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. Encourage children who finish early to help other children. When all have finished, read the solution and ask how the words were reflected in today's story.



## LOVING AND SERVING GOD

LG

Invite the children to help clean up the space.

Invite the children to name what they will remember most from today's story. Ask them to name one thing they will do to put their faith into action.

Read the charge below. Tell the children that, when you say, "Let us turn," they may turn in any direction they choose.



Ask parents and caregivers for their email addresses so you can send the Grace Sightings link, or invite them to visit [www.pcusastore.com/GGGdownloads](http://www.pcusastore.com/GGGdownloads). Remind the parents and caregivers about the story audio (see p. vii).

Jesus changes people who love him.

When Jesus changes us, he calls us to do God's work.

Let us turn . . . toward kindness.

Let us turn . . . toward generosity.

Let us turn . . . toward helping others.

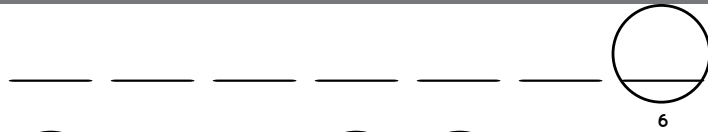
Let us turn . . . toward prayer.

Let us turn . . . toward Jesus.

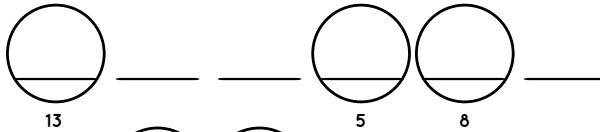
And let all God's children say, Amen!

Bless each child as they leave, saying, "(Name), go in peace, with a listening ear, caring words, and loving actions.

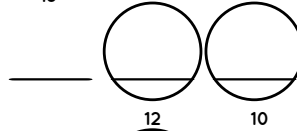
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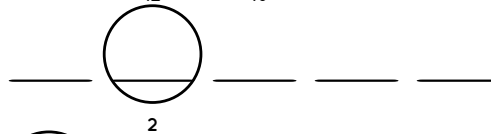
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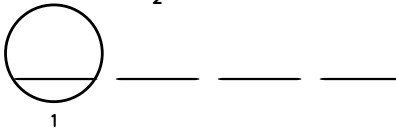
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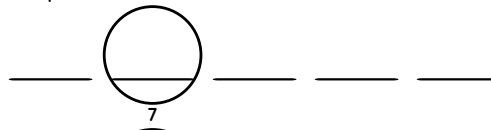
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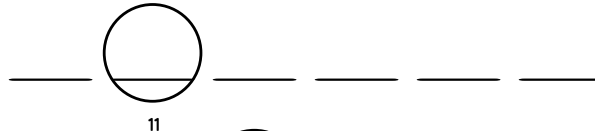
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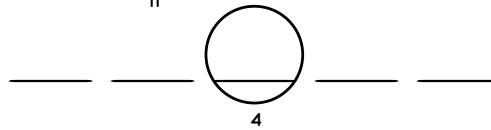
M J A E S



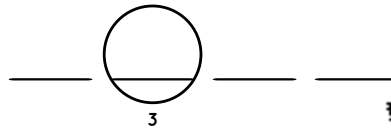
L O L W O F



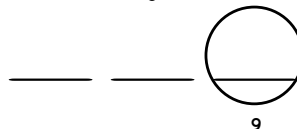
S V E R E



R A C E



G D O



**Word Bank**

AID	HELP
CARE	JAMES
COMFORT	JESUS
FOLLOW	SERVE
GOD	TRYING



How do we put our faith into action when we hear God's call?

