

Multiage (Ages 5-10)

Growing



in  
Grace & Gratitude

Year 1, Summer





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*Growing in Grace & Gratitude*, Year 1, was published as quarterly curriculum in fall 2021 through summer 2022. Additional sessions have been added to provide a sufficient number of sessions when needed.

Note that websites and bit.lys listed throughout this curriculum may have changed or disappeared since publication.

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## Introduction

This summer we will explore what is NEW, or was NEW at the time, fifty-some days and counting after the devastating death of Jesus and his miraculous resurrection, which would set in motion all things NEW.

After the birth of the NEW church on the Day of Pentecost, when the Spirit blew, the hearts of the disciples were ignited to share the good news about Jesus. Peter proclaimed the message of Jesus Christ, and people were drawn to this NEW community of believers. They gathered in homes, for lack of institutional space at the time, eating, praying, learning, and worshipping together. They shared in NEW ways, caring for the least of them, as Jesus had taught.

This NEW expression of faith and living was spreading. Peter and John healed a man at the temple gate, and he leapt and praised God for all to hear. On a dusty road to Damascus, one who had virulently persecuted the followers of Christ, or Christians as they became known, had a literal “come to Jesus” moment when Jesus spoke to him. Saul, whom we call Paul, was made NEW. Not only did he turn over a NEW leaf, he became Christ’s greatest evangelist, forming NEW Christian communities as he traveled far and wide.

Paul spoke to women at the river, and Lydia and her whole household became NEW believers. Paul spoke to a jailer, and he and his whole household became NEW believers. Paul continued to nurture, encourage, and admonish when necessary the NEW communities of faith he had established in places such as Corinth, Ephesus, and Philippi. We know this because we have his letters speaking of gifts and membership in the body of Christ, of love, of being fashioned as God’s house, and of joy in knowing that we are all going to be all right because we are in Christ. Through Paul’s Letter to Timothy, one of his helpers, we learn about the faith shared with Timothy from his mother and grandmother. We recognize how important those people who have nurtured us in faith are in our lives.

Good NEWs indeed!



## Overview of the Year 1, Summer Quarter

### Session Dates, Titles, Scriptures, and Goals

The complete scope and sequence for Year 1 can be found at [www.pcusastore.com/GGGdownloads](http://www.pcusastore.com/GGGdownloads).

The summer quarter begins with Trinity Sunday, the Sunday after Pentecost Sunday, and typically goes through the month of August.

Since the date of Easter changes every year, the number of Sundays after Epiphany and before Lent and after Easter will fluctuate from year to year. Additional sessions are provided, but check your calendar and plan accordingly. You may not use one or more sessions in one year, and you may use extra sessions in another year.

#### Year 1, Summer 1

Peter Tells about Jesus

Acts 2:14a, 22–42

Goal: To practice telling the story of Jesus as Peter did.

#### Year 1, Summer 2

All Things in Common

Acts 2:43–47

Goal: To learn ways we can follow the examples of the early church community.

#### Year 1, Summer 3

Healing and Praising

Acts 3:1–10

Goal: To offer praise and thanks for God's gifts.

#### Year 1, Summer 4

God's Grace Poured Out

Acts 9:1–22; 1 Timothy 1:12–14

Goal: To imagine how God's grace changes people and uses them for good.

#### Year 1, Summer 5

Paul Meets Lydia

Acts 16:9–15

Goal: To learn that we thank God by being kind to one another in Jesus' name.

#### Year 1, Summer 6

Paul Sings in Jail

Acts 16:16–34

Goal: To explore how trusting God frees us to be faithful in challenging situations.

#### Year 1, Summer 7

The Same Spirit

1 Corinthians 12

Goal: To consider the gifts of the Spirit and imagine how we can use them for the common good.

#### Year 1, Summer 8

Love Is . . .

1 Corinthians 13

Goal: To explore the importance of love in our lives.

#### Year 1, Summer 9

God's House

Ephesians 2:17–22

Goal: To celebrate that we are part of God's house.

#### Year 1, Summer 10

Rejoice!

Philippians 4:4–9

Goal: To find joy in knowing God is with us.

#### Year 1, Summer 11

Clothing Christ-Style

Colossians 3:12–17

Goal: To be inspired to live more like Jesus.

#### Year 1, Summer 12

I Remember You Constantly

2 Timothy 1:1–14

Goal: To help children give thanks for adult Christians in their lives.

## Resources and Session Components

*Growing in Grace & Gratitude* curriculum is available for fall, winter, spring, and summer as downloadable PDFs. Each season's material for the leaders includes:

- 1. Session plans for embracing children in the grace of God through engagement with the Bible**
- 2. Session title, session goal, and background information**
  - *Recognizing God's Grace* helps leaders explore the Bible story with a focus on God's grace in Scripture.
  - "In Your Children's Experiences" and "In Your Relationships with the Children" provide leaders with an understanding of the children's needs, abilities, and interests.
- 3. Three movements that echo Presbyterian and Reformed worship**
  - *Gathering in God's Grace*  
A hospitable welcome calls children to sing and pray to God, to hear and reflect on the Bible story.
  - *Responding in Gratitude*  
A choice of age-appropriate activities based on the group size and time available. Some activities (noted as "more prep") require advanced planning and/or additional supplies.
  - *Loving and Serving God*  
An invitation to discipleship that inspires children and their families to practice hospitality, generosity, and love.
- 4. Grace Notes (GN)**
  - Black-and-white reproducible pages that provide activities and crafts.
- 5. Stories, Colors & More (SCM)**
  - Colorful resources are provided to aid in the flow of the sessions.
  - The Support Map offers practical suggestions for working with children who have difficulty communicating, transitioning, reading, or writing and children who are visually impaired, deaf or hard of hearing, or in need of mobility support. The Support Map also provides tips for celebrating the strengths of children through leadership, generosity, and fairness.
  - Colorful illustrations of the Bible stories spark imagination. The stories appear on the back of the illustrations to make it easy for the leader to show the art while reading the story.
  - Other colorful resources, such as teaching pictures and maps, are organized in session order.
  - **Music & Melodies:** Song lyrics sheets are gathered in the back of the resource.



## Free Supplemental Resources

Download the following supplemental resources at [www.pcusastore.com/GGGdownloads](http://www.pcusastore.com/GGGdownloads):

- **Music & Melodies** are song tracks with familiar lyrics as well as new child-friendly tunes.
- **Grace Sightings**, an online resource to print or email home, includes a summary of the week's session and age-appropriate activities for home use.
- **Audio stories** of the weekly Bible stories are available to listen to online or download.

## Basic Supplies

All materials beyond this list will be specified in the supply list for each session:

- Bibles
- CD player
- cleanup supplies
- coffee filters
- cover-ups or smocks
- craft supplies (e.g., cotton balls, craft sticks, glitter, stickers)
- crayons, large and small
- cups, napkins, plates, utensils, drinking straws
- glue and glue sticks
- hole punch
- office supplies (paper clips, rubber bands, self-adhesive notes)
- paint, paintbrushes
- paper (card stock, construction, drawing, index cards, mural paper, newsprint)
- paper bags (lunch-sized, grocery-sized)
- pencils, colored pencils, markers, pens
- pipe cleaners
- plastic bags (ziplock, garbage)
- play dough
- rhythm instruments
- ribbon, string, yarn, scarves
- round-tip scissors (some left-handed)
- stapler, staples
- tablecloths
- tape (duct, masking, painter's, transparent)

## Reusing Materials

Encourage church members to collect a variety of materials for art projects, such as:

- buttons, ribbon, yarn
- clothespins
- egg cartons
- plastic containers
- shoeboxes
- old magazines, catalogs, newspapers
- paper tubes (from gift wrap, paper towels, or toilet paper)
- used gift wrap and cards

## Including Children with Disabilities and Special Needs

Create an environment that helps children of all abilities experience God's grace by becoming familiar with the developmental terms, descriptions, and icons on the Children with Disabilities and Special Needs Support Map (in *Stories, Colors & More*, **SCM iii–iv**). Colorful icons (LG T) from the map and notes about specific needs are incorporated into each session to offer ways to adapt activities. (Note: While many of the activities could fit in multiple categories on the support map, for simplicity, only those that require particular attention have been identified.)

Use the Visual Schedule (in *Stories, Colors & More*, **SCM i–ii**) to provide clear expectations and a visual cue for the group. By consistently using these tools, you will help your faith community discover and practice grace-filled ways to be the body of Christ with and for all children.

### Support Highlight: Visual Impairment

VI

When setting up your space, keep the area open and safe. While different storytelling area setups keep the environment fresh for many children, a child with visual impairments can be thrown off by the rearrangement. Consider keeping the area the same with a clear path. Remember to orient the child to any changes in the area.

Enhance your environment and lessons for children who are visually impaired.

- Organize materials in regular places to help with independence and success.
- Provide verbal cues and extra time to make transitions smoother.
- Involve the child to make them feel connected to the group.
- Give children tactile activities for a sensory option to connect with the stories.

### A Few Notes about Children and Reading

All versions of the Bible are above second-grade reading level. *Growing in Grace & Gratitude* tries to provide a way to share the Bible stories while engaging both pre-readers and readers. Since the Holy Scriptures were written for adults, curriculum writers try to choose sections of Scripture that children can understand. Still, at times, the children in your group may seem to struggle to understand a verse or passage. When that happens, assure them that God will help them understand the Bible in new ways as they grow. Encourage a sense of wonder at God's amazing ways. Reassure the children of God's grace, a grace that does not depend on how much they know or understand.

Some of the following strategies may enhance your time with the children:

- When you write something for children to read, print the words. Many of them cannot read cursive writing.
- If an activity sheet has something to read, ask for a volunteer to read it aloud rather than calling on an individual child. Even better, have the group read it aloud in unison. If most children in your group are pre-readers, ask them to point to the words on the page as you read them aloud.
- Make a poster with church vocabulary words. Each week, add a word to learn, such as *God, Jesus, love, Bible, pray, bless, thanks, disciple, praise, and worship*.
- Give each child a few sheets of paper folded in half and stapled to make a word book to keep in the room. When an activity calls for children to write a word, name, or simple sentence, let them know you are happy to write it in their word books so they can copy it.
- Expect children of this age to occasionally reverse letters (for example, using “b” for “d”) and to make errors in spelling. It is not important to correct such errors during the session.

- If children need to know a repeating response for a litany or drama, write it on newsprint. Invite them to read it with you in unison several times before beginning the litany or drama. Adding actions to the words will help children remember them.
- Many children love learning through rhymes and songs. Try to include music in each session.
- Many children enjoy acting out stories. Invite them to act out certain parts of the story as you read it aloud. Challenge them to act out what they think happened next in a story. Some children will be able to act out responses to questions more easily than writing them.
- Be careful not to hold up children for whom reading comes easily as being somehow “better.” Resist putting them in the role of leader.
- Affirm each child by name—whatever his or her reading and writing skill level—two or three times each session.

## Flyaway Books

Flyaway Books ([www.flyawaybooks.com](http://www.flyawaybooks.com)) is a children’s picture book imprint from Presbyterian Publishing Corporation. These books reflect themes of diversity, inclusivity, kindness, compassion, self-esteem, and care for our world, as well as retelling familiar religious stories in new ways. Flyaway Books titles are available at [www.pcusastore.com](http://www.pcusastore.com).

## Ideas for Working with Pre-readers

- Keep small pieces of scratch paper handy to write a word for a child to copy.
- If a child is struggling with an activity that calls for writing a word, write the word using dotted lines so he or she can trace it.
- Form pairs to solve puzzles. Encourage children to help one another—there’s no need to cover their papers so others can’t copy!
- If you observe a child struggling to work independently on an activity, offer to be his or her partner. If many are struggling, work as a group to complete the activity.
- If a child seems frustrated by writing, suggest that he or she draw a picture of the response or act it out. You also might offer to write what the child dictates to you.
- Offer old family-friendly magazines with pictures that can be cut out and used to illustrate a response or complete a project.
- When a child is trying to sound out a word, don’t be too quick to jump in and help. Whether he or she finally decodes the word or you provide it, affirm the new skill of reading and how hard the child is trying.

## Guidelines for Multiage Service Projects

- Each child has an important role or task.
- Encourage work in pairs or small groups.
- Set up pairs or small groups so each one has a combination of ages, when possible.
- Separate age-group peers some of the time. However, don’t cut them off from each other.
- Look for skills in the children rather than ages.
- What is unique to your multiage group?

## A Note about Candles

*Growing in Grace & Gratitude* suggests the use of a candle in the worship space for most sessions. Jesus said: “I am the light of the world” (John 8:12). The lighting of the candle reminds us of this and signifies the presence of the Holy Spirit with us. Most churches have a policy about candles and either lighting real candles or using battery-operated candles. While we simply state “candles,” *Growing in Grace & Gratitude* recommends using battery-operated candles for safety with children.

## Team of Contributors

The development team of *Growing in Grace & Gratitude* is grateful to have an amazing team of educators and writers to collaborate in the production of this curriculum.

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**DON MCKIM** wrote the biblical background in “Recognizing God’s Grace.” He is an honorably retired Presbyterian minister who has been an editor for Congregational Ministries Publishing and Westminster John Knox Press, a seminary theology professor, and an academic dean. He is the author and editor of a number of books on Reformed theology, including *Introducing the Reformed Faith*; *Presbyterian Beliefs: A Brief Introduction*; *Presbyterian Questions, Presbyterian Answers*; *More Presbyterian Questions, More Presbyterian Answers*; and the *Westminster Handbook to Reformed Theology*. He lives with his wife, LindaJo McKim, in Germantown, Tennessee. They have two married children and three grandchildren.

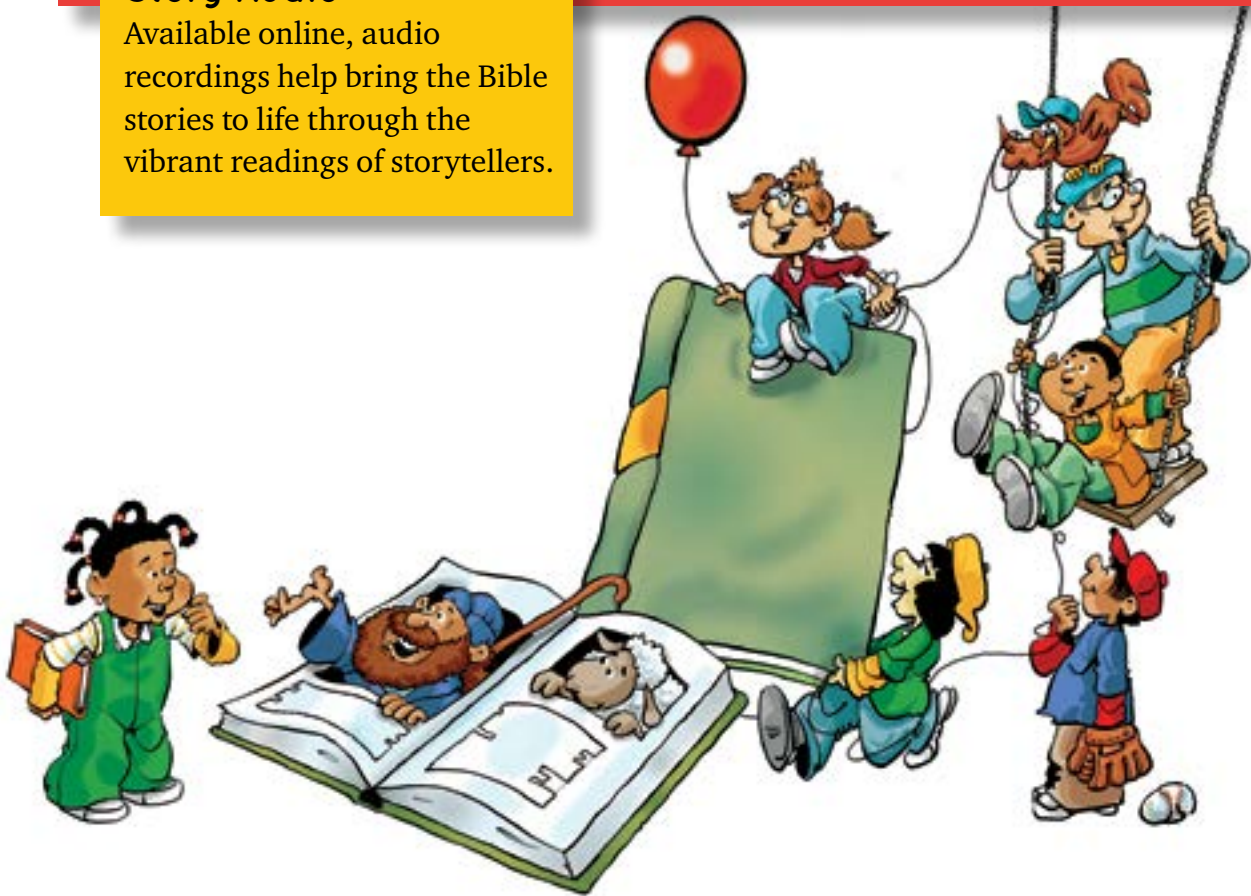
Free!

### ***Grace Sightings***

This online resource includes the story from the week's session and age-appropriate activities for children to do at home with their parents or caregivers. Each week's pdf shares the same colorful illustrations and Bible stories used in weekly sessions. With *Grace Sightings*, sessions reach beyond Sunday morning, encouraging children to live their lives as an expression of God's grace at home and at school.

### **Story Audio**

Available online, audio recordings help bring the Bible stories to life through the vibrant readings of storytellers.



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