



Healing and Praising

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

RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

. . . In Acts 3:1-10

The healing of the man crippled from birth is a powerful story of grace and gratitude. Peter and John were in the temple area when they encountered a man asking for money from temple-goers. When he asked Jesus' disciples, Peter said, "I don't have any money, but I will give you what I do have. In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, rise up and walk!" (v. 6, CEB). This word of power in the name of Jesus enabled him to stand and his body became strong. Then, "jumping up, he began to walk around" (v. 8, CEB). He was so grateful that "he entered the temple with them, walking, leaping, and praising God" (v. 9, CEB). Everyone was amazed, knowing this was truly the work of God.

The man was helpless. He had to have people place him at the temple gate each day. He had no hope for healing. But God's healing power came through the disciples. The man was healed by divine grace, God's pure gift. His great joy in receiving this grace put him in the grip of gratitude. His "walking, leaping, and praising God" was his full response of gratitude to God.

. . . In Your Children's Experiences

Knowing the feeling of gratefulness is a common experience shared by all ages. Children learn from parents about how to respond when someone does something kind for them. Inviting children to share a story about a time when they were grateful for someone or something is a good introduction to this story of the man who was grateful to his friends for helping him each day and to Peter who could heal him so he could walk again. Children will also be able to appreciate the man's joyful response of gratitude for what others did for him.

. . . In Your Relationships with the Children

Children in your group may have experiences seeing or knowing people who are disabled and who either can't walk or must walk with the help of a cane, a walker, or artificial limbs. They may be curious about people with disabilities. Be prepared for their questions and stories. Help them remember that people with disabilities may not all be cured, but they receive healing to their spirits when we are kind and helpful to them. When we do healing acts like this, we are living in grace and gratitude to God.

*O God, in Jesus' name, I thank you for all good gifts,
especially the people who care for me. Amen.*



Supplies

Music & Melodies

bit.ly/GGGMusicMelodies

Stories, Colors & More (SCM) i-iv, 3, 3a, 21, 22

basic supplies
(see p. vii)

audio stories (optional)
(see p. vii)

internet-connected
device

candle

green cloth

streamers

bag or container with
interlocking toy bricks

Responding

Celebrating

craft supplies such as
sponges, coffee filters,
pipe cleaners, yarn, and
so forth; spring-type
clothespins

Praying

newspapers, magazines

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.

“Celebrating God’s Grace” requires more prep.

Welcoming and Preparing

LG **A**

Welcome each child with, “Grace and peace be with you, (Name).” Prompt the children to respond, “And also with you.” Invite the children to prepare the worship space. Provide a Bible, candle, and green cloth. Explain that this is a time in the church year called Ordinary Time, and green is the color for growth and learning.

Ask some of the 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 today’s Scripture reading, one reading Acts 3:1-5 and the other reading verses 6-10.

Say that a gate into the temple is featured. A gate is a doorway or entrance through a wall. Decorate the wall around a doorway in your room to create a gate into the temple. Tape mural paper around the doorway, and invite the children to draw large stones on the paper.

Display **SCM 3a**. Wonder aloud what people might have seen when they walked through the gate. Admire the efforts of the children to create the worship space.

Singing

Play and sing “Amazing Grace”—**SCM 21**.

Praying

C

Turn on the candle as a reminder of Jesus’ light in the world. Let each child choose an interlocking toy brick from the bag or container. Ask the children to count the number of raised dots on top of their bricks and offer praise to God for that many things. Take turns offering praise by saying, “God, I praise you for . . .” Continue until each child has had a turn. If the children cannot speak their prayers, assure them that God hears silent prayers as well.

Invite the children to work together to build a tower of praise, making sure the tower includes each of their bricks. Place the tower on the worship table to serve as a reminder of praising God.

C *Some children don’t verbalize quickly. Nod to show them you are listening, giving them time to formulate an answer.*



Preparing to Hear the Story

Ask the children if they have ever been carried by someone else. Invite the children to think of different reasons someone may need to be carried (*babies have to be carried because they can't walk, a parent might carry a child to bed, a fireman might carry a person out of a burning building, and so on*).

Start with the person to your left, and invite them to share one reason for being carried. Continue around the group until all have had the opportunity to share their answers.

Comment that today's story is about a man who couldn't walk and had to be carried everywhere. Show **SCM 3a** and ask the children to imagine having to be carried through the temple gate.



Hearing the Story

LG MS LD

Invite a child to find Acts 3 in the Bible. Ask two volunteers to read Acts 3:1–10: the first reads verses 1–5 and the second reads verses 6–10. 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 table.

Show **SCM 3a** again, and ask the children to find the man begging for money outside the temple. Read **SCM 3** or play the story audio to hear a retelling of the Bible passage. Use your voice, tone, and expressions to make the story engaging. As you read the portion of the story where the man is able to stand, then walk, and jump, invite the children to do the same, either with their legs or by raising, waving, and pumping their arms.

Reflecting on God's Grace

MS TD C

Use a “before and after” activity to engage the story. Invite the children to work in groups of two or three to depict the man in the story before and after Peter healed him. Invite them to choose one of the following activities.

- 1) Draw a before-and-after picture.
- 2) Use play dough or modeling clay to create a before-and-after sculpture.
- 3) Use their bodies to create a before-and-after action.

Allow some time to make or practice their activities. Invite groups to share their activities. Then engage the children in conversation using the following wondering questions.

- I wonder, “How do you imagine the man felt when Peter told him to get up and walk? When he realized he could walk?”
- I wonder, “What happened to the man once he left the temple?”
- I wonder, “What in this story leaves you curious?”



- ▼ I wonder, “What in this story makes you feel amazed?”
- ▼ I wonder, “What does this story help us to know about God?”

Singing

Say that one thing the story teaches us is that God’s love is amazing. Sing together “We Are Dancing in the Love of God”—**SCM 22**. Invite the children to dance and praise God during the song.

Turn off the candle.

RESPONDING IN GRATITUDE

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

Claiming God’s Grace

B MS

Imagine together how the man, healed by Peter, must have walked into the temple after he was healed. Invite the children to use their bodies to show how he must have skipped, danced, and bounced excitedly over the gift of healing and his new ability to walk.

Invite the children to take turns sitting in front of the gate they created during “Welcoming and Preparing.” Encourage them to name one way God has shown them kindness through others (*a gift received; an invitation to join new kids at lunch; help with homework, etc.*). As they name the grace of that kindness, invite them to stand and dance through the gate and back again as all the children say, “God’s gifts are amazing!”

MS *Make sure children with mobility issues are included in all group activities. Find ways to adapt activities to ensure all are able to fully participate, such as instead of jumping up and down, raising arms up and down or tilting head from left to right.*



Celebrating God’s Grace

A

Remind the children that the man was so happy about being able to walk that he started to jump up and down, praising God. Invite the children to talk about what they like to do when they are very happy and excited. Encourage them to tell what words or expressions they use, as well as how they use their bodies.

Tell the children that they will make a painting to express joy. Provide a number of items from your craft supplies along with spring-type clothespins. Invite the children to create paintbrushes.

Pour different colors of tempera paint onto plates, and encourage the children to experiment with the brushes created by the group. Invite the children to express praise and thanks in their paintings. Consider playing lively music while they work.





Praying God's Grace LD

Comment that an expression used when one person helps another is "I'll give you a hand." When we say we are "giving someone a hand," we are helping them.

Provide newspapers or magazines, and help the children to identify situations where people need help. Distribute pencils and invite the children to trace their hands on the story or picture they found. Cut out the handprint. Allow a few moments for them to imagine ways God may be asking them to use their hands to help others.

Invite them to share the situation on the handprint and place it on the worship table. Offer prayers for those who are in need. Give praise and thanks to God for the people who are willing to help. Invite the children to watch for ways throughout this week that they can use their hands to help others.

Offering God's Grace F

Peter and John gave the man who could not walk a beautiful gift. Wonder together what would have happened to the man if Peter and John had not given him the gift of healing.

Note that sometimes we do not give gifts to other people—particularly gifts of kindness. Talk about reasons why we do not always give kindness freely. Ask the children to think about what would happen if people stopped giving gifts of kindness and caring.

Invite the children to name gifts that they can give to others—encourage them to think beyond material gifts and to consider gifts of kindness and time. Allow the children to work in groups of two or three to prepare a skit portraying how someone their age can offer the gift of kindness to another. Present the skits to the rest of the group.

Extra Activity LD

Remind the children about the man who went to the temple every day but could not go inside because he could not walk. Hand out copies of **GN 1**. Ask the children if they remember what Peter told the man. Tell the children to write Peter's words in the spaces below the footsteps. Begin with the first letter, by the star, and copy every other letter into the spaces, crossing them off as they go. When they get to the end of the first sentence, ask, "What did the man do?" Have them continue by beginning back at the top and writing the remaining letters in order on the spaces for the second sentence.

GN 1 Solution:

In the name of Jesus
Christ, get up and walk!

The man walked and
jumped and praised God.



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).

LOVING AND SERVING GOD

Lead the children in cleaning up the worship space.

Gather around the gate you made. Invite the children to talk about some of the ways they can show God's love this week. Remind them that Peter and John noticed the man and did not ignore him. Even though they couldn't give him money, they offered what they could give. It was a beautiful act of grace and love.

Offer a prayer thanking God for the grace of those who offer kindness and to share kindness when we have the chance.

Encourage the children to pay attention to times they receive kindness from others. Remind them that there is an opportunity to offer their thanks and praise to God. If the children created hands during "Praying God's Grace," encourage them to collect their hands and use them as a prayer reminder.

Send each child with a blessing, "(Name), the grace of God be with you."

