



God Makes a Way

Goal: To trust that God is faithful and will always guide and lead us.

RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

. . . In Exodus 13:17-22; 14:1-22

The people of Israel were on a journey. They had left Egypt and were now going to the land God promised. They were moving from where they were to where God wanted them to be.

But how could they know which way to go? Before roadmaps or GPS, how would they know what direction to take?

God provided a way. The people followed “a pillar of cloud by day, to lead them along the way” and “a pillar of fire by night, to give them light, so that they might travel by day and by night” (13:21). God was leading the journeying people.

When the people were pursued by Pharaoh's army and came to the Red Sea, God provided a way for the people to cross. A strong wind divided the waters so the people could cross on dry ground (14:21, 22). So the people were safe.

Our lives of faith are a journey. We follow God's way of love. We are moving from where we are to where God wants us to be. Along our way, God's loving grace provides the help we need to guide and protect us. We follow in our journey, with gratitude.

. . . In Your Children's Experiences

Pillars of clouds and fire to guide the way are vivid symbols of God's presence with the people, guiding their journey. Children may know and have experience with taking a family trip, and most are familiar with how to get around with a GPS in the car or on a phone. Flashlights on phones and in the hand help brighten a dark path. Children also understand about traveling together and trusting that someone knows the way and will get there safely. Older children will be able to grasp the concept of a lifetime and the ways that God is present with us throughout our lives.

. . . In Your Relationships with the Children

“Traveling mercies” is a kind of blessing people say when someone is leaving on a trip. So are “be safe,” “take care,” or “come home soon.” As you prepare to teach this group, be attentive to their questions, the things in the story about which they are curious. Older children will be able to understand how their lives are moving forward and how God is a part of that journey in faith with them. Younger children will be able to name specific ways the people were able to follow God and connect that with some of their own experiences of going on a trip.

Guide me, O God, in the ways of grace and peace. Amen.



Supplies

Music & Melodies
(MM) 2022-2023

Stories, Colors & More
(SCM) i-iv, 2, 14

basic supplies
(see p. vii)

story audio (see p. vii)

candle

green cloth

two blue blankets or
sheets

Responding

Claiming

tables, orange cones,
boxes, or natural
obstacles found outside

Celebrating

card-stock copies of
Grace Notes (GN 1)

Praying

copies of **GN 2**

Offering

card-stock copies of
GN 3, clear contact
paper

Extra

copies of **GN 4**

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 “Offering God’s Grace” require more prep.

Welcoming and Preparing

B MS A

Play “To the Promised Land”—**MM 2**—as children arrive. Welcome each child with “Grace and peace be with you, (*Name*).” Prompt the children to respond, “And also with you.”

Invite the children to help prepare the setting as they arrive. Create a worship area with a green cloth, a candle, and a Bible.

Ask a few children to help prepare any “Responding in Gratitude” activities you may be doing today. Suggest that one or two prepare to lead today’s singing. Today’s Scripture passage is lengthy. Decide if you will have volunteers read it or use **SCM 2**. Ask for several volunteers to practice the reading.

Ask the children to lay two blue blankets or sheets side by side on the floor to create a sea. Lay the blankets or sheets so the edges meet in the middle. Tell the children that they need to find a way to cross the sea. Invite them to brainstorm ways to cross the water. They might use chairs to build a bridge, pull the material apart, or use a cushion as a boat. Remind the children to use caution if the floor is slippery. Encourage them to find and act out as many ways as possible to get across the water. Ask them where they would try to cross it with a large group of people if they were in charge.

Singing

TD

Ask the children to sit on one side of the “sea.” Invite them to talk about their experience of crossing the waters. Ask them if they have ever been in a situation when they have had to trust God with their safety.

Play “To the Promised Land”—**MM 2; SCM 14**. Listen to the song then play it again and sing along. Encourage the children to dance or move to the lively music.

C *Some children who have tactile sensitivities are bothered by everyday items that most people don’t notice. Tags in clothing, sand or grass on feet, even the feeling of a scratchy or felted blanket can cause a reaction that may be interpreted as bad behavior. Plan for alternatives.*



Praying

Turn on the candle. Invite the children to share one glad thing and one sad thing from their week. Prompt the children to respond to each share with “Hear our prayer, gracious God.” Affirm each child’s response. Respect those who do not wish to share.

Preparing to Hear the Story

L M

Ask the children what they know about Moses and the time he spent in Egypt. Use some of the following information, if necessary:

- ▼ Moses was born in Egypt as a Hebrew slave.
- ▼ The midwives, his mother, his sister, and the Pharaoh’s daughter saved Moses. He grew up as a member of the royal family.
- ▼ When Moses was an adult, he didn’t like the way the Hebrew people were treated. He realized that he was one of the Hebrew people.
- ▼ Moses left Egypt and became a shepherd. One day he came upon a burning bush. God spoke to him from the bush and told Moses to go back to Egypt to save the Hebrew people.
- ▼ After the ten plagues that God sent, Moses was finally allowed to lead the Hebrew people out of Egypt.

Tell the children that this is where today’s story begins. Even though the Hebrew people had escaped Egypt, Pharaoh’s army was chasing them. The Hebrew people were not yet safe.

Hearing the Story

L

Invite a child to find Exodus 13 in the Bible. Ask for several volunteers to read Exodus 13:17–22; 14:1–22 or **SCM 2**. 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 in the worship area.

Ask the children to recall what the word *exodus* means (*to leave or escape*). God led the Hebrew people and provided a way out. God was faithful.

Reflecting on God’s Grace

B

Using the sea, invite children to act out the story. Help the children identify the various characters in the story (Moses, Hebrew people, Egyptians). Have them decide the actions, such as a way to separate the sea. Ask volunteers to play characters and handle special effects. Read **SCM 2** as they act out the story.

Repeat the drama with different children, boys or girls, portraying Moses and separating the sea. Afterward, ask children how it felt when they portrayed the different people.



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.



Singing

LG A D

Invite one child to tap out a rhythm on his or her thigh and have the other children copy the rhythm. Repeat until each child has had a turn as leader. Keep in mind that accuracy of copying the rhythm is not important; enthusiasm and fun are.

Chant or rap words and phrases to the beat, such as “God is gracious,” “We are free,” “Be with us, God,” and so on.

Turn off the candle.

RESPONDING IN GRATITUDE

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



Claiming God’s Grace

B M MS

Before the session, create an obstacle course either in the room or outside. Place chairs to go around, tables to go under, small boxes to hop over, or cones to make a maze. As an alternative, you can go outside and use natural obstacles such as trees and bushes.

Ask the children about the obstacles the children of God faced on their journey in today’s Bible story. List the obstacles on newsprint (Egyptians, fear, lack of food, no time to pack, the sea, and so on). Ask the children to think about the kind of obstacles they face today. Make another list. Point to each obstacle in your course and ask children to decide what it might represent in their lives. You may want to label the obstacles. Review the course, explaining if they need to go around, under, or over the obstacle. Play!

- B** *Children with behavioral issues (and even some without) may struggle with a long list of complicated rules. Keep guidelines broad and simple, such as: try your best, respect others, be polite.*

Celebrating God’s Grace

On newsprint write: “Thank you, God, for always being with us.” Invite the children to work together to make a pennant banner.

Hand out card-stock copies of **GN 1** and ask the children to cut out the triangle shape. Using the triangle as a template, have the children draw at least 38 triangles on different colors of construction paper. Explain that each letter and space in the phrase on newsprint will be on individual triangles.

Assign letters. Suggest that the children write the letters as large as they can on the triangles. Be sure to include the punctuation on the appropriate letters: u, d, and s. Help younger children as necessary. Encourage creativity and individuality. Suggest the children use pencils first to make sure the letters are large, then use markers to make the lines thick enough to be seen from a distance. Have them decorate their letters.



Punch holes in the top two corners of each triangle. Line up the letters in order on the floor, adding the spacer triangles as needed. Show the children how to thread the triangles together with yarn. Take turns threading so all are involved.

Hang the pennant banner in a hallway where other people can see it and be inspired to trust and believe in God's leadership and guidance through life.

Praying God's Grace TD

Make a prayerful reminder that God will always lead and guide us. Hand out copies of **GN 2**. Read the prayer on the pillar of flame.

- ▼ Color the flame and cut it out.
- ▼ Turn the flame over, prayer side down.
- ▼ Cover the back with glue and attach a craft stick extending beyond the bottom of the flame. Use pieces of cotton balls to cover the glue.
- ▼ Allow to dry, then on the cloud side of the stick have the children write "cloud by day," and on the flame side of the stick write "fire by night."

Encourage the children to keep the prayer reminder and read the prayer each night during the coming week. In the morning, they can turn the reminder to the pillar of cloud.

TD *Some children struggle with textures. Cotton balls are a common trigger and can cause feelings of nausea or anxiety. Give advance warning and provide options such as paint markers or sponge-tip squeeze bottles. Allow the child to wash their hands if needed.*



Offering God's Grace LG

Before the session, cut two 4½" squares of clear contact paper for each child.

Create reminders of God's guiding and protecting love to put in a family vehicle or give to a traveler.

Invite children to tell what they know about GPS units or map apps that use GPS and about times when GPS guided their families. Explain that GPS stands for "Global Positioning System" and that satellites are used to help people find the locations for which they're looking.

Say that the Hebrew people didn't have GPS, but they had two gifts of God's grace to guide them: pillars of cloud and of fire. Distribute card-stock copies of **GN 3** and invite children to read the Scripture verse aloud with you. Provide colored pencils, squares of clear contact paper, glitter, scissors, large rubber bands, and duct tape. Help the children follow the directions on the sheet to make God's GPS.



GN 4 Solution:

Row 1: C, A
Row 2: D, E
Row 3: E, B
Row 4: B
Row 5: A, D

Extra Activity

Provide copies of **GN 4** and pencils. Tell the children that this is a picture Sudoku, meaning that each row and each column will have only one of each of the five pictures shown at the top of the page. Have them figure out which pictures are missing and write the corresponding letter in the blank spaces. Hint: The fourth row is missing only one picture; this is a good place to start. While the children are working, wonder together what might be happening in each of the pictures.

LOVING AND SERVING GOD

Ask the children to help clean the space, except for the two blue blankets or sheets.

Gather around the sea and remind the children of how the sea became a means of escape for the Hebrew people. Ask the group what they have learned about God through the exodus story.

Offer a short prayer:

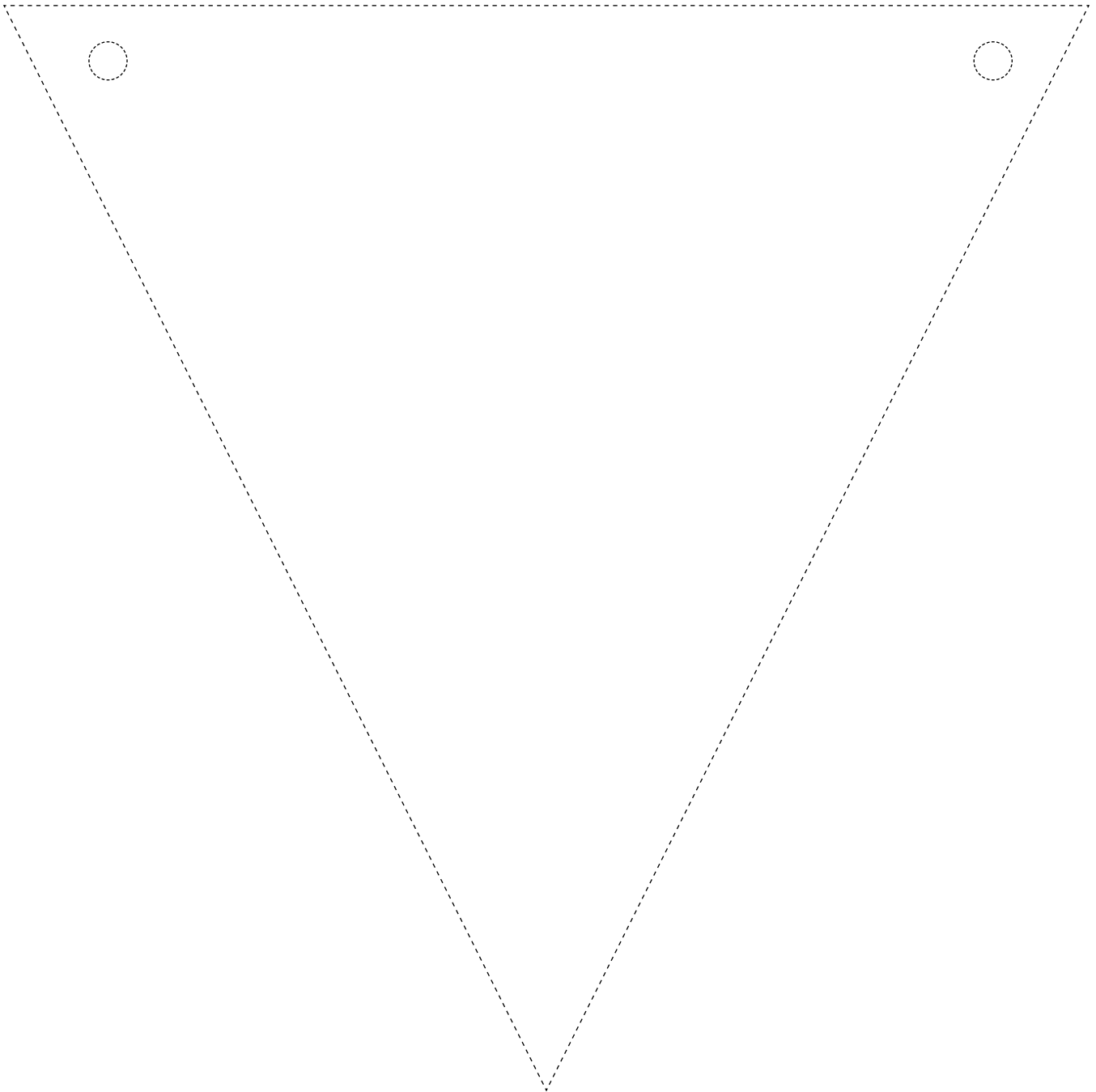
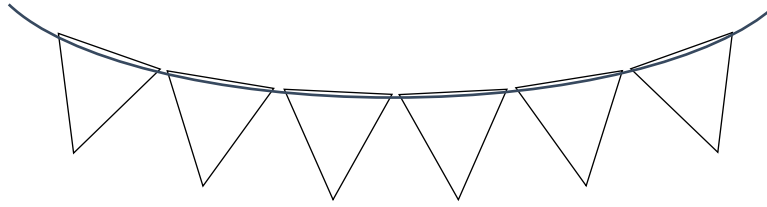
Thank you, God, for saving your people.
Thank you for opening a path in the sea.
Thank you for providing possibilities in impossible situations.
Help us to see new ways of doing things.
Help us to love others as much as you love us.
Amen.

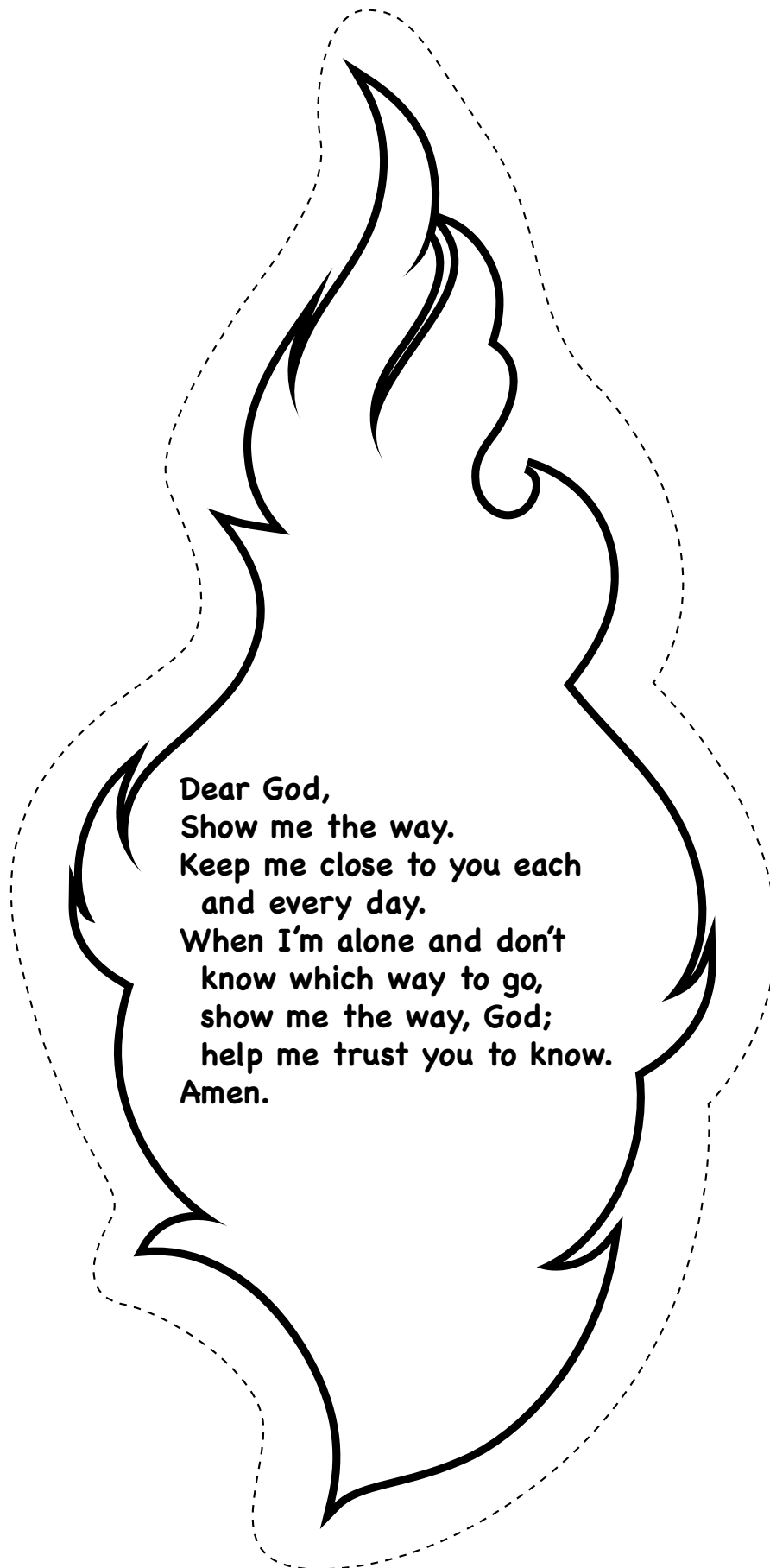
Bless each child, saying, “(Name), remember that God is always with you. Go in grace to love and serve the Lord!”

Challenge the children to read or listen to the story during the week.



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. Remind the parents and caregivers about the story audio (see p. vii).





Directions:

- Color the picture with colored pencils.
- Cut out the circle, following the dotted line.
- Take the backing paper off one square of contact paper. Place it on a table, sticky side up.
- Sprinkle a small amount of glitter onto the sticky side of the contact paper.
- Place the circle facedown on the glitter and contact paper.
- Take the backing paper off the other square of contact paper. Place it on the back of the circle. Smooth out any big bubbles with your fingers.
- Trim the contact paper to the edge of the circle.
- Attach a large rubber band to the back of the circle with duct tape. The rubber band will fit over a car visor to remind everyone in the vehicle of God's promise to always guide us.





A



B



C



D



E

