



God Calls a Shepherd Boy

Goal: To celebrate that God knows us inside and out.

RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

. . . In 1 Samuel 16:1-13

Samuel's role as God's prophet led to his finding a shepherd boy, David, to be anointed and become Israel's greatest king.

When God rejected Saul, Israel's first king, God instructed Samuel to visit Jesse of Bethlehem, for "I've chosen one of his sons to be my king" (16:1). Initially, Samuel thought the tall and handsome son of Jesse, Eliab, would be God's choice. But God said, "No." For "people judge others by what they look like, but I judge people by what is in their hearts" (v. 7). Eventually, Jesse's seven sons appeared before Samuel, but none were God's choice. When Samuel inquired if Jesse had another son, he was told the youngest son, David, was out taking care of the sheep.

As soon as David appeared, the LORD told Samuel, "He's the one! Get up and pour the olive oil on his head" (v. 12). David was to become king and "the Spirit of the LORD took control of David and stayed with him from then on" (v. 13).

God guided Samuel to the person God wanted to be king. David was not the most obvious choice. But he was God's choice. God's grace guided; and the nation would be grateful.

. . . In Your Children's Experiences

Making choices, being chosen—these are experiences that children have. Wise school teachers make sure each child has a chance to be a leader. The story of God choosing David to be the leader of God's people provides a great way to think about the ways that God wants us all to live with one another. Children quickly learn about difference and evaluating people by how they dress or speak, or how they look. This session is a reminder that what matters are the things that can't be seen; what is inside our hearts is what's important for children of all ages to remember.

. . . In Your Relationships with the Children

Inviting children to tell stories about a time when they have been a leader and what they did is a great way into this story of David. Naming characteristics of leaders would be a good activity for older children who are able to name people they know in their church, community, and country. Children quickly pick up on what the culture values in a leader. The story of David invites them to consider a very important quality in a leader. The thing that God wants is a faithful heart, a person who is wise, is caring, and loves others. As you send them on their way at the end of the session, invite them to add their response to this sentence: "You are a leader when . . ." As they leave, bless them with the sign of the cross on their forehead or on their hand, anointing them for their work as one of God's leaders.

Holy God, open my eyes to the gifts you have given each child in my group. Remind me that you have given me gifts too. Amen.



Supplies

Music & Melodies
(MM) 2022–2023

Stories, Colors & More
(SCM) i–iv, 7, 17, 19

basic supplies
(see p. vii)

story audio (see p. vii)

green cloth

candle

olive, canola, or
sunflower oil

fragrant items such as
flower petals, spices,
orange and lemon
rinds, eucalyptus, and
essential oils

small mixing bowls

paper towels

tiny plastic or glass
containers with lids

Responding

Claiming

variety of magazines

Celebrating

ink pad(s), glass gems,
decoupage glue, small
magnets

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.

“Celebrating God’s Grace” requires more prep.

Welcoming and Preparing

LG **A** **B** **M** **MS** **FA**

Greet the children by name and with the words “The grace of Christ be with you.” Prompt the children to respond with the same words.

Invite children to help set the scene. Provide a Bible, a green cloth, and a candle. Have children cut hearts from construction paper and use crayons to write on them feelings we may feel in our hearts, whether positive or negative (*joy, love, envy, anger*, etc.). Add the hearts to the worship table.

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. Ask for several volunteers to practice today’s Scripture reading.

In biblical times, anointing oil was likely olive oil blended with fragrant perfumes. Invite children to make their own samples of anointing oil using materials provided. Be sensitive to allergies. Use olive oil or another light oil such as canola or sunflower oil. Avoid peanut oil in case of allergies. Have a variety of fragrant items on hand (for example, flower petals, spices, orange and lemon rinds, eucalyptus, and essential oils). Small containers with lids allow children to take their oils home. Place the bottles on the worship table and save them to be used in “Loving and Serving.”

Singing

C

Play and sing “God Is So Good”—**MM 5**, **SCM 17**. After singing the song, ask the children to name ways God is good to them.

C *For some children, listening and speaking may take longer. Be patient and encourage other children to do the same.*

Praying

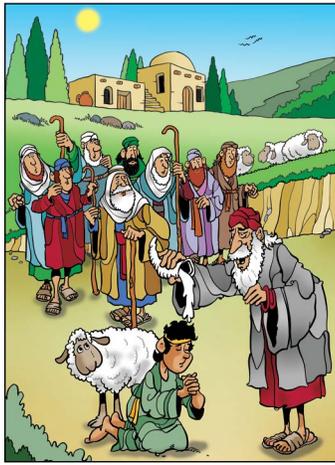
Turn on the candle. Ask the children to share in one word what their heart feels right now. If they need help, offer that they could be feeling excited, curious, bored, eager, and so forth. Go around the circle so that each child has the chance to offer one word. Pray:

God, you know the feelings of our hearts. Thank you for your constant love. Amen.



Preparing to Hear the Story C L

Return attention to the items on the worship table. Invite children to listen for the ways each fits into the story they will hear. Invite children to share stories about a time when they have been a leader and what they did. Wonder together what qualities God thinks make a good leader.



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.

Hearing the Story C L

Invite a child to find 1 Samuel 16 in the Bible. Ask for several volunteers to read 1 Samuel 16:1-13. 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.

As you read the story again using **SCM 7**, pause after reading each sentence below. Have the children work as a group, or two groups alternating scenes, to create a tableau, a scene without talking. Once they have determined their group action, making sure everyone is included, invite them to share it with you. Then continue the story until the next scene.

Use these sentences for them to depict:

- ▼ When Samuel arrived in Bethlehem, the people came to worship.
- ▼ Jesse's oldest son, Eliab, was tall and strong. But he was not to be king.
- ▼ One by one, Jesse's sons stood before Samuel.
- ▼ David was tending the sheep.
- ▼ Samuel knew David was the one God had chosen.
- ▼ David knelt. Samuel poured oil on his head, setting him apart for God's work.

Thank them for their creative ways of using their bodies to tell the story.

Reflecting on God's Grace M MS

Wonder together what it was about David that made God choose him as king. Reread the paragraph beginning, "But God disagreed. . . ." Wonder aloud what the differences are in looking at what is on the "outside" of a person and what is on the "inside" of a person. Ask the children which they think is more important and why.

Singing MS

Give God an offering of music. Play, sing, and dance to "Every Time I Feel the Spirit"—**MM 13; SCM 19**. Rejoice that, like David, God's Spirit is with each of us.

Turn off the candle.



RESPONDING IN GRATITUDE

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

Claiming God's Grace C

Give each child two sheets of construction paper. Provide magazines and ask the children to cut out a variety of faces to glue on one sheet of paper. Observe the faces they add. Ask questions such as: "What can you tell about a person by their face or the way they dress?" or "Do you think you can tell how they treat others by the way they look?"



Tell children that God looks at what we are like on the inside. God knows us by the thoughts and feelings we have and how we let them guide the way we treat others.

Invite children to cut a large heart out of the other piece of construction paper, gluing just the top of the heart over the faces (so that it makes a flap they may lift). Invite the children to write or draw on the heart something that will remind them that God doesn't see us the way people do, God sees what's inside.

TD *Some children struggle with touch and feeling messy. Give advance warning and provide options such as crayons or markers for drawing. Allow the child to wash their hands often if needed.*



Celebrating God's Grace TD C

Make a reminder to celebrate that God sees our hearts. Tell the children that we are each unique, like a fingerprint, and that God knows each of us.

Provide a clear glass gem for each child and ink pads to share. Use the following directions to make a fingerprint heart.

- ▼ Trace the clear glass gem several times on a sheet of blank paper.
- ▼ Press finger onto an ink pad.
- ▼ Gently press finger with ink into the shapes traced on the paper.
- ▼ Press finger onto ink pad again.
- ▼ Rotate finger slightly and press down again to make a heart.
- ▼ Make a heart in several of the shapes.
- ▼ Cut out the heart you like the best.
- ▼ Place a drop of decoupage glue on the back (flat side) of the clear glass gem. Don't use too much. The ink may smear.
- ▼ Place the fingerprint heart to the glue side of the glass gem.
- ▼ Set aside to dry.

As the glue dries, encourage the children to name things about themselves that are unique. Invite them to consider not just hair color or height, but also things that are in their heart such as who they love and what they think.



When the glue is dry, provide a small magnet to glue to the back of the gem. Suggest that the children put their heart on a refrigerator or other metal surface that they will see often to remember that God sees their heart.

Praying God's Grace



Gather children in a circle; lead them in this body prayer, inviting them to repeat both words and motions after you:

Thank you, God, (*praying hands starting at center of chest and lifted above head*) /
 for knowing the real me. (*swirl right hand above head and then over heart*) /
 Help me (*praying hands lifted above head and lowered to center chest*) /
 to see others as you do. (*look to person on right and left*) /
 Make my heart joyful, (*waving both hands in the air*) /
 loving, (*arms crossed over chest*) /
 compassionate, (*hands placed over heart and then held out*) /
 and faithful. (*palms up, raising arms above head*) /
 Forgive my anger, (*mad face*) /
 rudeness, (*arms crossed angrily*) /
 and jealousy. (*pulling an imaginary rope toward you*) /
 You are good and I am grateful. Amen. (*make a circle shape extending arms above head and down to waist*) /

Offering God's Grace



Encourage children to think of their friends and family members, identifying the good qualities they have that others may not know about. Invite them to see their friends and family as God does. Maybe Mom is quiet, but is always helping others; maybe others see a friend as only a good ball player, but that person is also kind to kids with few friends.

Provide copies of **GN 1** and pencils. Ask the children to choose one of the people they thought about and to write or draw their good qualities around the figure. Inside the figure, invite the children to write a note to that person, telling the person they chose what these qualities mean to them. Ask them to sign the note with the encouragement that God knows them inside and out. Let each child take their note with the understanding that they should deliver it to the person they wrote it to. Offer a prayer for the people the children recognized, thanking God for knowing each of us inside and out, and asking for the grace to see others that way too.



Extra Activity



Remind the children that God knows us inside and out. God sees who we truly are. Provide copies of **GN 2** and colored pencils. Encourage the children to respond to the prompts with words and pictures showing what God and others see on the outside and what God sees on the inside. Invite the children to share their pictures when they have finished. Give thanks that God knows us inside and out.



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).

LOVING AND SERVING GOD



Invite the children to gather, and lead them in cleaning up the worship space.

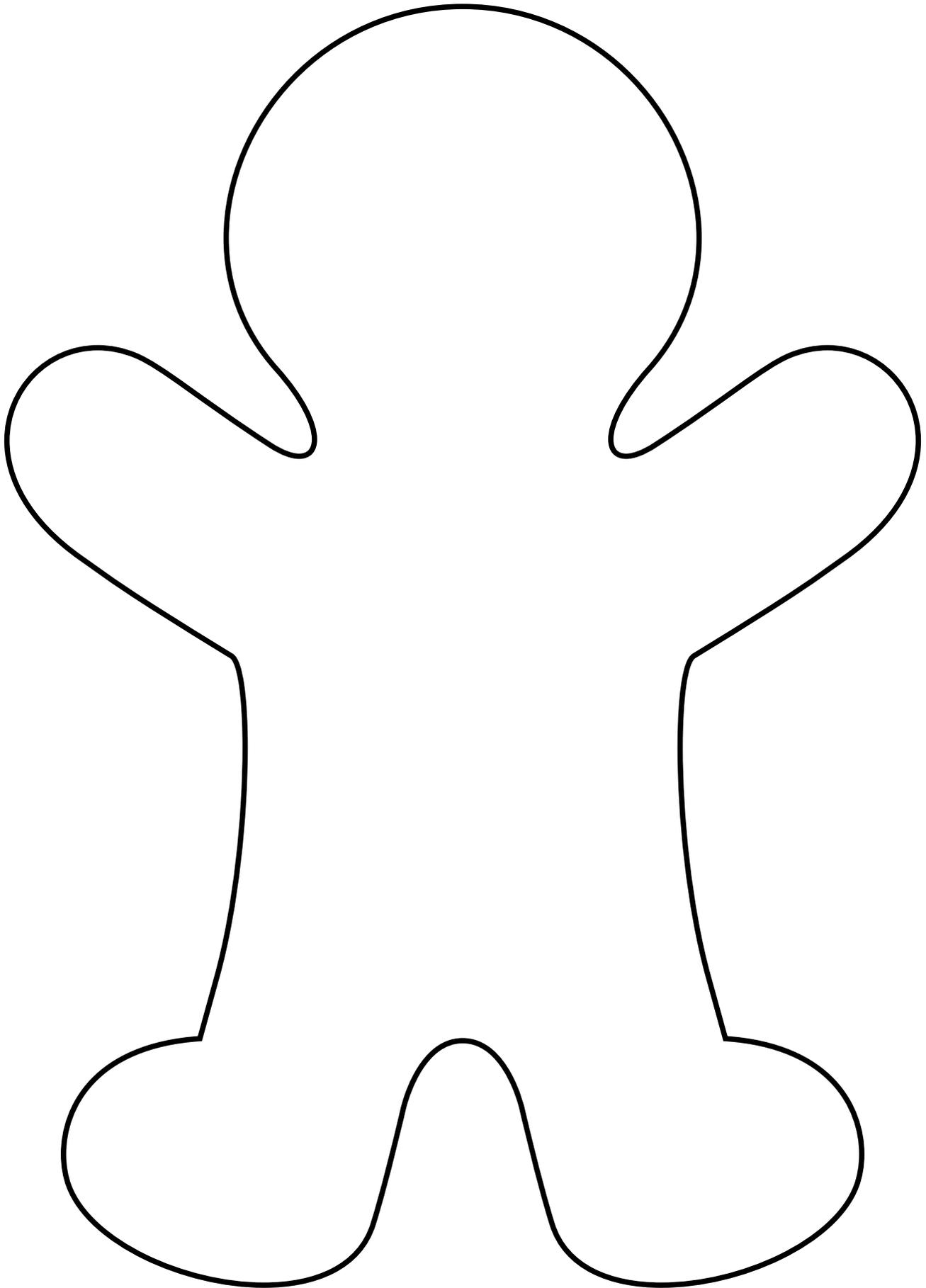
Wonder together what qualities would have made David a faithful king and good leader, what qualities God wants to see in each of us.

Ask each child to finish this sentence: “God sees . . . about me, but God also sees . . .”

As they leave, using each child’s oil made in “Welcoming and Preparing,” bless them with the sign of the cross on their foreheads or hands, marking them to work as one of God’s faithful leaders.

As you anoint each one with oil, say, “(Name), go in God’s grace to serve the Lord.”

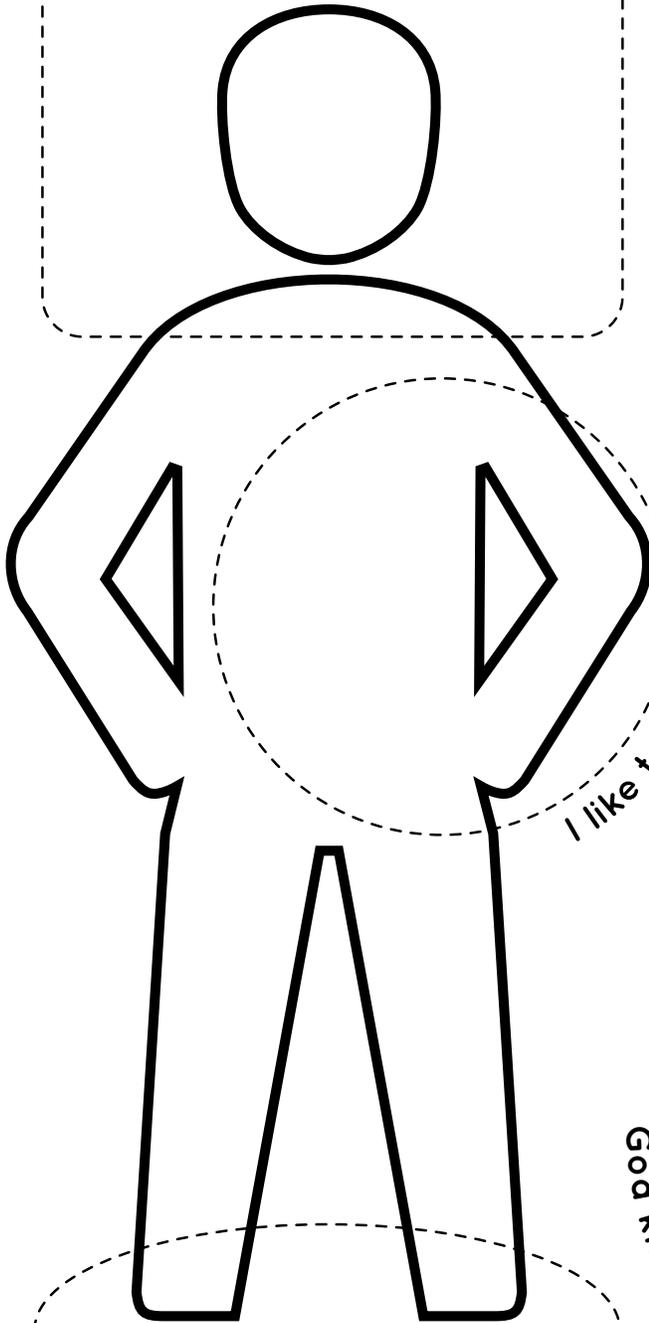
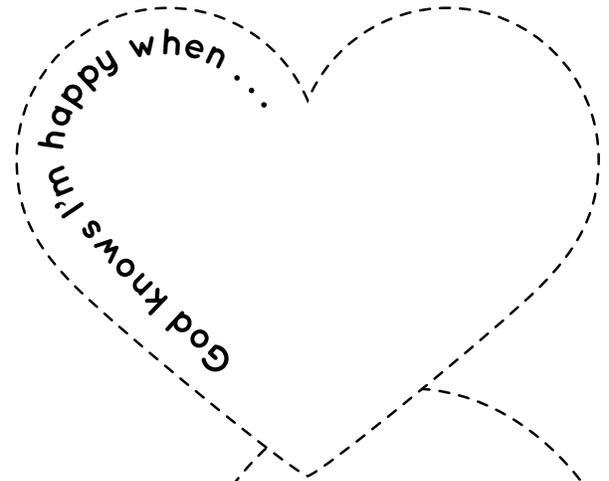
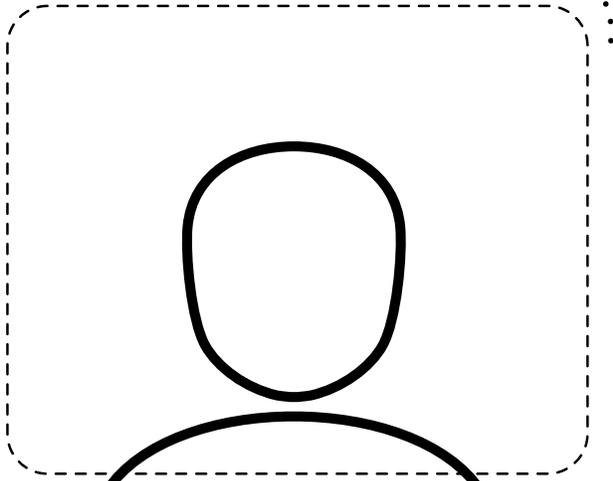
Send the oil home with each child to use for blessings at home.



OUTSIDE

INSIDE

I like when my hair looks like ...



I like to play ...

God knows I'm sad when ...

My favorite shoes look like ...

God knows my best qualities are ...

