



God Is My Rock

Goal: To trust God's presence in times of trouble.

RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

. . . In Psalm 62:1-2, 5-7

A rock is often used in the Bible as an image for God. In the Psalms, rocks are mentioned to remind God's people of the trust they can place in God, of God's might and majesty, and of God's enduring presence throughout all generations. Verse 5 sets the tone for Psalm 62, a psalm of David. God is my hope, my rock, my salvation, my mighty rock, and my refuge.

Stories and images of rocks occur frequently in Scripture. Moses was hidden in the cleft of a rock and sheltered by God's hand as the splendor of God passed over (Exodus 33:22), and God provided water from a rock for the thirsty exiles in the wilderness (Exodus 17:6). Rocks were set up as memorials to significant events in the lives of God's people (Joshua 4). Imagine David as a shepherd boy tending his flocks, choosing stones for his slingshot, and remembering the trustworthiness of God (1 Samuel 17). Or David the fugitive, escaping the pursuit of Saul by hiding in caves (1 Samuel 24).

The word translated "rest" means to be quiet, to settle in peacefully, to rest silently. When David was accosted by his enemies, he was silent, not because he was a coward, but because he trusted God, his rock, his salvation, his refuge. David's ability to rest in God alone showed what Calvin called "the grace of silence."

. . . In Your Children's Experiences

There are many things in children's lives that can make them feel insecure or afraid. They may have experienced the disruption of parental separation, moving, or changes in their households and families. They may be fearful of things real and imagined—war, the dark, environmental destruction, and so on. The rock is an important symbol of God's absolute and steadfast trustworthiness. This is an important message for children and adults alike.

. . . In Your Relationships with the Children

Children are often fascinated by rocks. They are intrigued by the color, texture, and strength of stones and pebbles. Although children may be interested in rocks, they may not understand or grasp the scriptural metaphor of God being our rock. Young children are concrete thinkers. They will understand that God is like a rock because God is strong and reliable. However, they may also interpret the comparison of God to a rock as indicating that God is a rock. Clarify the difference between equating God with a rock and comparing God to a rock.

*When I am overwhelmed, O Lord, lead me to the rock
that is higher than I am, for you are my refuge. Amen.*



Supplies

Music & Melodies
(MM) 2022–2023

Stories, Colors & More
(SCM) i–iv, 10, 10a, 10b,
21, 22

basic supplies
(see p. vii)

story audio (see p. vii)

green cloth

candle

large rocks

brown duct tape
(optional)

Responding

Claiming

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

Offering

card-stock copies of
GN 2

Extra

river rocks

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.

“Offering God’s Grace” requires more prep.

Welcoming and Preparing

Play “Kum Ba Yah (Come by Here)”—**MM 17**—as children arrive. Welcome each child with “Grace and peace be with you, (*Name*).” Prompt the children to respond, “And also with you.”

Invite children to help prepare the worship space. Provide a green cloth, a candle, a Bible, several large rocks, and **SCM 10a** and **SCM 10b**. Invite the children to make rocks by filling paper lunch bags with grocery sacks, newspaper, or scrap paper. Tape the bags closed with masking tape or brown duct tape. Place these created rocks at the base of 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 a volunteer to practice the Scripture reading.

As children prepare the space, engage in discussion about what exciting things happened to them this week. Be sure to share too. Thank them for their efforts in preparing the worship space.

Singing

Listen to the first two verses of “Kum Ba Yah (Come by Here)”—**MM 17**; **SCM 21**. “Kum Ba Yah” is an African American spiritual. Ask the children to name times when we would ask God to be with us. Sing the song together.

T *Children who struggle with attention may have difficulty with listening activities. Help them focus by using hand gestures or listening prompts.*

Praying

Turn on the candle. Invite the children to pray a responsive prayer. Explain that you will offer a line of prayer and then will pause; during the pause, they should respond: “God, you are always with us.”

Gracious God, we thank you for your presence among us.

God, you are always with us.

When we are happy and excited,

God, you are always with us.

When we are frustrated or fearful,

God, you are always with us.



When times are good and when they are hard,
God, you are always with us.

No matter where we go, what we do, or what happens to us,
God, you are always with us.

And for that, loving God, we give you thanks. Amen

Preparing to Hear the Story C

Call attention to the worship table children helped create earlier. Invite them to imagine what a bunch of rocks may have to do with today's Bible lesson. Encourage them to recall anything they have heard from Scripture about rocks and invite their ideas for what rocks may have to do with today's story. Take a few minutes to identify some characteristics of rocks. Some ideas might be that they are strong, and they can be big like a mountain or small like a pebble.

Hearing the Story LG LD VI

Invite a child to find Psalm 62 in the Bible. Ask for a volunteer to read Psalm 62:1-2, 5-7. 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 in the worship area.

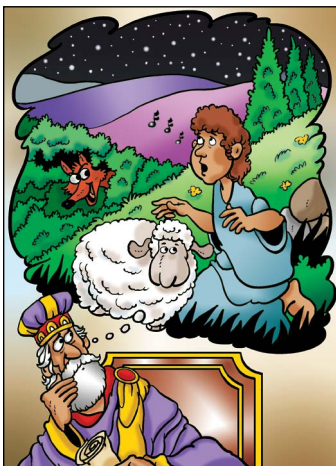
Teach children the following sign for *rock*. Make both hands into fists, and bump your right fist on top of your left fist. Encourage the children to make the sign each time you say "rock" as you read the story again from **SCM 10** or listen to the story audio.

Reflecting on God's Grace A M C L

Engage the children in conversation about the story, using the following questions:

- ▼ What did you notice that David said about God in our story?
- ▼ What did you like about this story?
- ▼ What did our story from Psalm 62 teach you about God?

Direct the children's attention to **SCM 10a** and **SCM 10b**, the rock and the fortress. Discuss the function of a fortress. On a sheet of newsprint, list ways God is like a rock and a fortress. Invite the children to write some of these characteristics on the paper bag rocks you made for the worship space. For example, they may write "God is strong," "God protects us," "God is with us," or other characteristics they are able to identify in comparing God to a rock and fortress. Return the rocks to the base of the worship table.



Visit bit.ly/sign-rock to see the sign for *rock*.

Note: bit.ly web addresses are case sensitive.



Singing

Play, listen to, and clap to “God Hears Our Prayers”—**MM 20**;
SCM 22.

Turn off the candle.

RESPONDING IN GRATITUDE

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

Claiming God’s Grace



Read the following prayer of David from the story:

In the silence, I am waiting for God.
For God will save me.
God is my rock. God is my help. God is my fortress.
I shall never be shaken!

Offer that these words from David are an affirmation of faith. David is saying exactly what he knows to be true about who God is and how God will be present with him. Talk about things children would add if they were a psalmist, one who wrote a prayer or song. Wonder together what things they know to be true about God.

Hand out copies of **GN 1**. Work together or form small groups. Have the children fill in the prompts to create a four-line psalm for their group. Invite each group to create movements to the four lines from the story and their new four-line psalm, using their bodies along with their words. After an allotted time, invite groups to speak and move to the lines using the motions they created.

Celebrating God’s Grace



Play the classic game Rock, Paper, Scissors. Remember: Rock beats scissors, scissors beats paper, paper beats rock. To play “tournament style,” make sure each child has a partner. Each team plays best two out of three rounds. Once a winner is determined, the team shouts out, “God is our rock!” The winner should find another winner to face off against while the other player cheers on the one who beat them. This process continues until only two players remain to face off, each with a crowd behind them, cheering them on.

For a variation of the game, all the children play at once. Gather the children in a circle and have them place one hand behind their backs. Together, count to three and show either rock, paper, or scissors. If at least one of each is showing, everyone stays in the circle and the play is repeated. If only two items show, the “stronger” one wins (for example, scissors beats paper, even if there are two people with scissors and four people with paper). The play continues until

If you are unfamiliar with this game, visit [bit.ly /game-rockpaperscissors](https://bit.ly/game-rockpaperscissors).

Note: bit.ly web addresses are case sensitive.



there is only one person left. At the end of the game, have all the children rejoin the circle and chant softly to more loudly, “God is our rock!” Play again as desired.

F *Sometimes children protest that they’re being treated unfairly when it may be only that they’re not getting what they want. When self-interest overrides attempts to be fair, ask them to flip the situation and look at it from the other person’s perspective.*

Praying God’s Grace

M T

Remind children of the line from the story, “In the silence, I am waiting for God.” Invite them to consider together how the silence may help us wait for God. Explain that as a prayer practice you will all practice silence together. Encourage children to find a comfortable spot or position. Invite them to clear their minds and simply wait for God as David did, and remember that God is always present with them. Suggest that it may be helpful for them to repeat this line silently in their minds: “In the silence, I wait for God.” Allow for three to five minutes of silence, depending on what your group is most capable of doing. After the silence, ask if they noticed anything during this time.



Offering God’s Grace

LG

Before the session, check with your pastor or worship committee about placing small cards in the sanctuary pews. Ask that an announcement be made during worship to encourage people to take a card with them.

Tell the children that they will be making cards that people can take with them to remind them that God is with them in times of need or trouble. Hand out card-stock copies of **GN 2**. Have volunteers read what is written on the cards. Invite the children to use their creativity to draw a large rock or fortress on each card. Have them cut apart the cards. If it is possible, go to the sanctuary and place the cards on the pews or sticking out of hymnals or Bibles.

LG *Teach children about the power of teamwork. When children learn to support others, cooperate, and problem solve as a group, they become better leaders. Serving others helps children see firsthand that they have the power to make a difference.*



Extra Activity

Remind the children that David understood that God was like a rock, like those in the mountains that were around him. God was strong, steadfast, and always present. Tell the children that they will paint a rock to take home and remind them that God is always with them too.

Have the children choose a rock. Provide acrylic paints and paint pens. Invite the children to paint their rocks with symbols, pictures, or words to remind them of God’s presence with them. Write the following phrases on a sheet of newsprint for the children to use as they wish:

God is good.

God is my rock.

A.S.A.P. (which means “Always Say A Prayer”)

God loves me.

After the children have finished painting their rocks, form a circle and have the children place their rocks in front of them. Pray:

God, you are our rock. Thank you for being with us all the time, but especially when we need you most. Amen.

Encourage the children to take their rocks home and place them in a spot where they will see them, reminding them that God is always with them.



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).

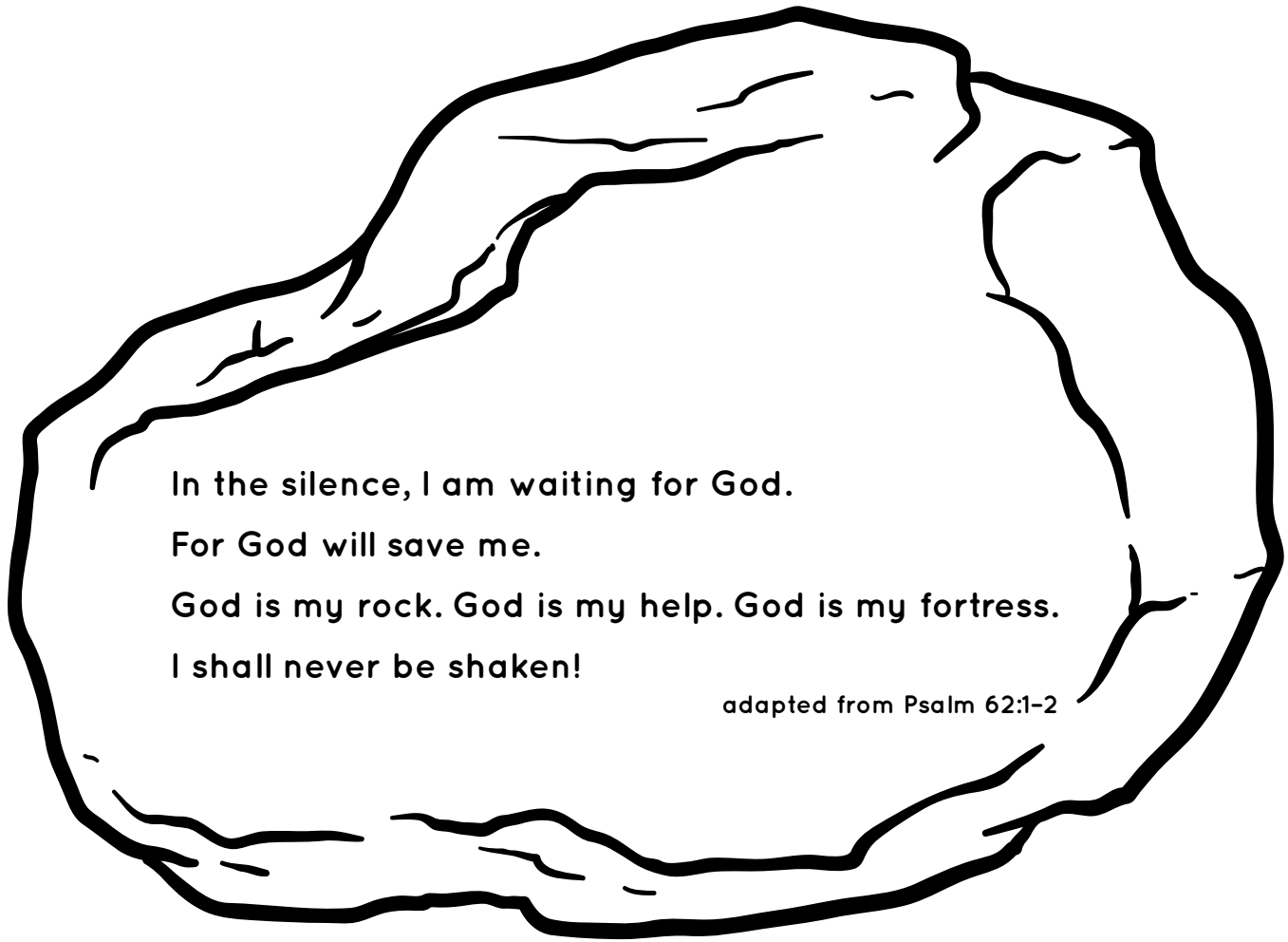
LOVING AND SERVING GOD

Lead children in cleaning up the worship space.

If the children did not make a rock in “Extra Activity,” encourage each child to take a rock from the base of the worship table—one on which a description was written during “Reflecting on God’s Grace”—and to place it somewhere in their rooms so that it can serve as a reminder each day this week that God is their rock, always present with them.

Wonder together how we can let others know that God is present with them in times of trouble.

Bless the children, saying, “Go in peace because God is with you; go in joy because God is your rock; and go in gratitude because you are safe in God.”



In the _____, I am _____
 for _____.

For _____
 will _____ me.

_____ is my _____. _____ is my
 _____. _____ is my _____.

I shall _____!

God is my rock.

God is my rock.

God is my fortress.

God is my fortress.

God is my help.

God is my help.

God is with me.

God is with me.

