



Praise the Lord!

Goal: To praise God with all that we have.

RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

. . . In Psalm 150

The final song in the book of Psalms is part of the collection known as the Hallelujah psalms, consisting of Psalms 146–150. Each of these psalms begins with the word *Hallelujah*, which can be translated “Praise Yah!” *Yah* is short for *Yahweh*, the personal name of God in much of Hebrew Scripture. *Yahweh* is usually translated “LORD.” At the heart of the psalms is the desire to praise God for being God. In fact, the Hebrew title for the book of Psalms, *Tehillim*, means “songs of praise.” Psalm 150 is an appropriate conclusion.

Psalm 150 can be divided into three parts. The first two verses praise God in both earth and heaven (sanctuary and firmament) for what happens on earth and heaven (God’s mighty deeds and surpassing greatness).

The next three verses serve as the second part. The psalm builds to a crescendo as musical instruments elevate the praise of God’s people. It is as if something needs to be said so powerfully that words simply aren’t up to the task. The movement of dance provides greater power to this wordless praise. Finally, as if to emphasize their power, the crash of cymbals is mentioned twice.

The final verse, which is the third part of the psalm, calls on all living things on the earth to praise the Lord!

. . . In Your Children’s Experiences

How do the children in your group participate in congregational worship? There are many simple ways to include them, such as inviting older children to read Scripture (be sensitive to those who may have literacy concerns), establishing child and youth choirs, and using songs and hymns that are appealing to young people. Children can be encouraged to play simple rhythm instruments during hymn-singing times. Many older children and youth play instruments and can be invited to accompany the choir.

. . . In Your Relationships with the Children

Reflect on the ways in which you worship with the children during your time together. Do you set aside a corner of the room for worship time? Are children given opportunities to create their own prayers? How are the experiences of children from different cultural backgrounds reflected in your worship? Stories, art, and music often provide opportunities for discussion about who God is and how God calls us to live. Make a list of ways that you can strengthen and affirm the participation of children in worship.

*Wonderful God! May all that I have and all that I am praise you!
Amen.*



Supplies

Music & Melodies
(MM) 2022–2023

Stories, Colors & More
(SCM) i–iv, 11, 18, 20

basic supplies
(see p. vii)

story audio (see p. vii)

variety of colored cloths

candle

variety of musical
instruments, including
rhythm instruments

jingle bells; beads;
empty containers such
as milk cartons or jugs;
cardboard oatmeal
canisters, small cereal
boxes, or egg cartons

Responding

Celebrating

cards cut from **Grace**
Notes (GN) 1

Praying

SCM 11a, 11b, 11c

Offering

variety of colored
ribbon

Extra

card-stock copies of
GN 2 cut in half, screw-
top caps (two per child),
thread

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.

“Extra Activity” requires more prep.

Welcoming and Preparing

LG SD C A

Play “Hallelujah! Praise Ye the Lord!”—**MM 11**—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. Encourage children to use the variety of tablecloths to cover the worship table so that it is colorful and festive. Have them place a candle in the center of the table. Invite the children to explore the musical instruments. If some instruments are special or delicate, show the children how to handle them; otherwise, encourage the children to try out the instruments.

Invite the children to use mural paper to create a poster that simply says “Praise!” and encourage a couple of children to decorate the mural before hanging it from the front 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 work to prepare the space, engage the children in conversation, using the following questions:

- ▼ What does it mean to “praise God”?
- ▼ What do you imagine are some ways to offer praise?
- ▼ Why is praise important?

Singing

L

Play and sing “Hallelujah! Praise Ye the Lord!”—**MM 11; SCM 18**. Sing the song together once. Then invite the boys (or half of the group) to sing the “hallelu, hallelujah” parts and the girls (or other half of the group) to sing “Praise ye the Lord.”

Praying

L VI

Turn on the candle. Invite the children to pray a responsive prayer, following your actions and saying “We praise you!” after each prompt.

God of grace, with our hands (*wave hands*)

we praise you!

God of grace, with our mouths (*move hand outward from mouth*)

we praise you!



God of grace, with our hearts (*use hands to make the shape of a heart*)

we praise you!

God of grace, with our arms (*extend arms out*)

we praise you!

God of grace, with our feet (*do a little dance*)

we praise you!

Amen.

Preparing to Hear the Story

Provide a variety of jingle bells, empty containers, yarn, paper plates, beads, rubber bands, tape, and other craft materials. Invite the children to be creative and use the items provided to create a musical instrument to use as you read today's story. Comment that there is no wrong way to create an instrument. Provide guidance as needed.

As the children create their instruments, ask them to share experiences where they have seen or heard instruments, played, such as worship, a sporting event, a concert, a play, a parade, and so forth. Talk about how music makes us feel at different times and in different situations.



Hearing the Story

B L

Invite a child to find Psalm 150 in the Bible. Ask for a volunteer to read Psalm 150. 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.

Have children hold the instruments they made. Tell them you will let them know when you want them to use them. Read the story using **SCM 11** or use the story audio. Upon completing the "Hallelujah, Praise God!" section, tell children you are going to read it again and they can play their instruments as you read. At the end of the story, encourage the children to play their instruments again, praising God!

Reflecting on God's Grace

C L

Engage the children in conversation, using the following questions:

- ▼ What does this story teach us about God?
- ▼ What did you like about this story?
- ▼ What does it teach us about what it means to be faithful?
- ▼ How do you see yourself in this story?
- ▼ What does this story show us about what it means to praise God?



Singing



Listen to “Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow (A Dios, el Padre celestial)”—**MM 15; SCM 20**. Note that the second time that it is sung the lyrics are in Spanish. Ask the children when they have heard this song. This may be a familiar tune, often known as the “Doxology,” that is sung during worship, usually after the offering. Go over the lyrics in both languages and sing the song together.

Turn off the candle.

RESPONDING IN GRATITUDE

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

Claiming God’s Grace



Comment that today’s story reminds us to praise God with all that we have, that if we breathe, we can praise God. Suggest that there are no limitations to how we can praise God. Tell the children that they are going to create a “praise rhythm” and praise God with all that they are.

Work as one group or form small groups. Encourage the group(s) to come up with a “praise statement,” for example: “We praise God with all we are!” or “Hallelujah! We praise God!” Once they have agreed on their statement, encourage them to turn it into a chant by adding rhythm and using their bodies with a cadence of stomps, claps, snaps, pats, and so forth. Provide several minutes for them to work out their praise rhythm. Invite the group(s) to share their praise rhythm. Offer gratitude for their creativity.

LG *Allow children to make choices as they learn the concepts of responsibility and the consequences of making decisions. Opportunities to make decisions can lead to better confidence.*

Celebrating God’s Grace



Re-read the indented song from the story. Remind the children of all the ways the psalmist encourages us to praise God. Play “Praise Charades” by placing the cards cut from **GN 1** in a bag. Invite the children to take turns drawing a card out of the bag, saying, “I praise God . . .,” and acting out what is written on the card without using any words or sounds. Assist with reading as needed. The other children try to guess what they are doing. When their action has been correctly guessed, they should say, “Hallelujah!”



Praying God's Grace

M T

Encourage children to sit comfortably, making sure they can see **SCM 11a**, **SCM 11b**, and **SCM 11c**. Tell the children to take a few good, deep breaths and ask them to try to empty their minds of other things they may be thinking of. Lead the children in a guided meditation, using the following directions:

- ▼ Take a few moments to look at the artwork. (*pause*)
- ▼ Notice details. (*pause*)
- ▼ Notice the different ways people are praising God. (*pause*)
- ▼ Imagine the way they must be feeling as they offer praise. (*pause*)
- ▼ If you were in this artwork, imagine where you would be and what you would be doing. (*pause*)
- ▼ Imagine how you feel as you offer praise to God. (*pause*)
- ▼ Quietly stand and use your body to offer praise. Maybe you raise your arms or hold out your hands. Maybe you cover your heart with your hands, or maybe you look up toward heaven. (*pause*)
- ▼ Hold your praise pose for a few moments as you think about God's goodness. (*pause*)

Offering God's Grace

B MS

Before the session, determine a route for your praise parade, outdoors if possible.

Lead a "praise parade." Allow a few moments for children to select several colors of ribbon they wish to wave. Have them cut lengths of the ribbon and hold two or three in each hand. As you walk on your praise parade, encourage the children to call out things they see that they wish to praise God, for example: "For the big blue sky!" "For the birds flying overhead!" "For our church!" When someone calls something out, everyone should wave their ribbons and respond, "Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!" Encourage the children to invite children, youth, and adults to join the parade as they walk, giving them one of their ribbons.

- ⓑ *Providing opportunities for boys and girls to explore the church and its grounds helps them understand their surroundings during worship. However, it can also provide opportunities for unwanted behavior such as being disrespectful in a holy place. Help children focus on respecting others and being polite.*



Extra Activity



Make dancing puppets to praise God. Give each child a half-sheet of GN 2 and a paper cup. Invite the children to color and decorate the arms and head as themselves. They may add yarn or other material for hair. Use the following directions for making the puppets:

- Cut out the head and arms.
- Turn cups upside down and write “Praise God!” on the front of the cup.
- Glue the back of the head to the front of the paper cup. Glue the arms, where indicated, to the back of the cup.
- To make legs, fold a 12”–14” length of yarn in half and tape the fold to the inside of the cup.
- To make feet, tape or glue a screw-top cap to each end of the yarn.
- Tie one end of a 9” length of yarn to the center of a craft stick.
- Wrap one end of a 20” length of thread around the craft stick several times and secure with tape.
- Repeat on the other end with another length of thread.
- Tape the loose end of the yarn in the center to the base of the cup.
- Lift the puppet using the craft stick.

Help the children tape the other end of the thread to the feet of the puppet, adjusting the length so the puppet can stand when the craft stick is held. Show the children how to rock the stick back and forth, making the puppet dance. Have a puppet dance party, praising God!

- *Some children may struggle with a long list of complicated directions. Break down tasks into easy-to-process steps and provide ample time to complete each task before moving on.*

LOVING AND SERVING GOD

Lead children in cleaning up the worship space.

Gather the children and sing “Hallelujah! Praise Ye the Lord!”—**MM 11; SCM 18**. This time, invite the girls (or half of the group) to sing the “hallelu, hallelujah” parts and the boys (or other half of the group) to sing “Praise ye the Lord.”

Bless the group, saying, “Psalm 150, this song of praise, includes each of you because you breathe. As you go now, let your whole life offer praise to God who loves you. Amen.”



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).

by playing the trumpet!

by strumming my guitar!

by dancing with all my might!

with loud crashing cymbals!

by banging the drums!

in the church!

by running outside!

when I pray!

with my whole heart!

with my singing voice!

in the quiet!

when I breathe!



