



God Calls Jeremiah

Goal: To wonder how God might be calling us.

RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

. . . In Jeremiah 1:4-9

Jeremiah endured suffering as God's prophet. What sustained him? His call from God. Here he recognized he was being set apart to serve God. In this account, we see several stages.

First, Jeremiah recognized God's commissioning. God said, "Before I created you in the womb I knew you; before you were born I set you apart; I made you a prophet to the nations" (1:5, CEB). God chose Jeremiah, even before his birth, to carry out God's work. This is the deepest sense of purpose imaginable. But then Jeremiah objected. He said he didn't know how to speak and was only a child (v. 6).

Yet God reassured Jeremiah. God said not to be afraid; that wherever he went, "I'm with you to rescue you" (v. 8). This was a divine reassurance that no matter how bad things got, Jeremiah could depend on the presence and protection of God.

Finally, to make this real, God gave Jeremiah a sign. God "stretched out his hand, touched my mouth, and said to me, 'I'm putting my words in your mouth'" (v. 9).

God's grace called and protected Jeremiah. He spent his life in gratitude for God's grace and in obedience to God's call.

. . . In Your Children's Experiences

Children probably have many experiences of hearing a parent or other adult call them with a job for them to do. "Hey, I need your help." Children of all ages will be able to tell a story about ways they help out and chores they do. You might ask, "Is there a job you don't think you could do?" or "Are there jobs at home or school or in the neighborhood that you don't like to do?" These questions will help make the transition to telling the story of Jeremiah and understanding his response to God's call to him to be a prophet.

. . . In Your Relationships with the Children

As the children arrive, involve them in helping you with something for the session. Let them assist you with getting out supplies for the learning activities or putting out the Bible or candle. As you involve them in getting the room ready, you could talk with them about the ways they help out at home. What jobs do they have to do at home or at school or in their neighborhood?

As you tell the story of Jeremiah and his reluctance to believe he could do what God was asking, remind the children that whenever they have tough jobs to do, God is with them.

Dear God, open my ears to your call and give my feet strength to respond. Amen.



Supplies

Music & Melodies
(MM) 2022-2023

Stories, Colors & More
(SCM) i-iv, 12, 19, 26

basic supplies
(see p. vii)

story audio (see p. vii)

green cloth

candle

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

Responding

Claiming

copies of **GN 2**

Offering

internet-connected
device, copies of **GN 3**

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

LG A B M MS

Play “Holy, Holy, Holy!”—**MM 29**—as the children arrive.

Welcome each child by saying, “Grace and peace be with you, (*Name*).” Prompt the children to respond, “And also with you.” Invite children to place a green cloth, a candle, and a Bible on the worship table.

Ask some children to prepare today’s “Responding in Gratitude” activities. Suggest that one or two lead today’s singing. Ask for a volunteer to practice reading today’s Scripture passage.

Ask two children to make a line on the floor with masking tape. Invite all of the children to think of things that might be difficult for them to do. Gather at the line. Say that one end means “too young,” the opposite end means “too old,” and the center means “just right.” One at a time, name the items on the list below and invite the children to stand on the line to indicate if they are too young, too old, or just the right age to do it:

- ▼ Sleep in a crib
- ▼ Go to school
- ▼ Drive a car
- ▼ Read
- ▼ Eat baby food
- ▼ Buy a house
- ▼ Have friends
- ▼ Get married
- ▼ Do homework
- ▼ Help other people

Tell the children to keep the question “Am I old enough?” in mind during today’s story.

Singing

T

Gather together and play “Every Time I Feel the Spirit”—**MM 13**; **SCM 19**—as the children listen. Play the song again and encourage the children to clap the rhythm and move as they sing.

Praying

Turn on the candle reminding us of God’s presence. Invite the children to share one glad thing and one sad thing from their week. Prompt the children to respond accordingly to each share with “Praise God!” or “Hear our prayer, gracious God.” Then end by saying:

God of grace, thank you for hearing our prayers. In Jesus’ name. Amen.



Preparing to Hear the Story

Ask the children to describe what a prophet is. Explain that a prophet is a person who speaks God’s words to the people of God. Many times, a prophet would tell the people how they were not being faithful to God, what would happen if they continued to be unfaithful, and that they needed to *repent* (return to God). Invite the children to strike a pose showing how they think a prophet might look.

Tell them that they will hear a story about how a boy named Jeremiah became a prophet. Jeremiah lived about six hundred years before Jesus. Explain that God chose Jeremiah to be a prophet, and Jeremiah thought it was too big a job for someone so young.

L *Children who struggle with attention may have difficulty during story time. To help with focus and comprehension, suggest listening prompts, engage them with movement, or provide a specific item within the story picture to find.*



Hearing the Story

L

Invite a child to open the Bible to Jeremiah. Encourage the children to listen as a volunteer reads Jeremiah 1:4–9. Conclude by saying, “Word of wisdom, Word of grace,” and prompt children to say, “Thanks be to God.” Place the Bible on the worship table.

Tell the children they will hear a retelling of the story. Distribute copies of **GN 1** and crayons. Tell the children to imagine how Jeremiah might have felt as he listened to God and color the faces of these emotions as you read the story on **SCM 12**.

Reflecting on God’s Grace

L MS

Have the children return to the masking-tape line. Ask the children to move to the place that shows their response to the following:

- ▼ Listen to God.
- ▼ Speak God’s words.
- ▼ Do what God calls me to do.

Emphasize that they are always the right age to do what God wants them to do.

Say that Jeremiah did what God asked him to do. Wonder what is hard about following God:

- ▼ How do you know when God is calling you to do something?
- ▼ What might God be calling you to do?

Singing

Give God an offering of music. Play and sing “Holy, Holy, Holy!”—**MM 29**; **SCM 26**.

Turn off the candle.



RESPONDING IN GRATITUDE

Select activities appropriate for your group and the time available.

Claiming God’s Grace



Have the children recall the conversation with Jeremiah and God from the story. Form two teams. Team J will represent the voice of Jeremiah. Team G will represent the voice of God. Provide copies of GN 2 to the teams. Allow the children to decide whether they will speak as one voice or have an individual represent the team. Tell the children to think about the emotions they imagined Jeremiah feeling. Suggest that all team members show those emotions as they read the script.

Switch teams and read the script again so that children can experience both parts. Conclude with all of the children responding in unison with the last line of the script, “God, I am yours.”

Celebrating God’s Grace



Remind the children that God called Jeremiah, and Jeremiah responded. Play a call-and-response game with music. Form two teams, designating one Team A and the other Team B. Tell Team A that they will sing along to the first two lines of “Every Time I Feel the Spirit”—MM 13; SCM 19—and choose an action to do such as stand up/sit down, stomp feet, wave hands, do a silly dance, clap, and so forth. Team B will then respond to Team A by repeating the next two lines of the song and the action from Team A. The song will repeat two more times, so Team A should be prepared with additional actions. Play the song again and reverse the roles of the teams. Repeat several times, having fun with the call and response.

Praying God’s Grace



When God calls the young boy Jeremiah, God reminds him that God formed him and knew him and chose him. Give each child a lump of play dough. Invite the children to form something from the clay that represents them. You may need to give the children some suggestions, such as forming something they like, something they like to do, or even a small sculpture of themselves. Invite the children to share their sculptures with the group.

Play “Music Over Water”—MM 31—or other contemplative music as they sculpt.

After they have completed their sculptures, gather in a circle. Invite the child to your right to share his or her object and go around the circle until everyone who wants to share has done so.

Have the children place the figures on a table, then gather in a circle around them. Lead an echo prayer:



Thank you, God, /
For forming us /
And knowing us. /
Help us /
To listen to your call /
And to respond as Jeremiah did, /
By becoming your messengers. /
Amen. /



Offering God's Grace



Remind the children that God called Jeremiah to be God's messenger when Jeremiah was a boy. Jeremiah, himself, wasn't sure he could do anything or make a difference, but God promised to be with him and give him what he needed.

Tell the children they are going to watch a video about a young boy who decided—maybe felt called—to make a difference. He wasn't anyone special or famous. In fact, he was pretty broken, literally. He has a condition that makes his bones fragile and easy to break. But that doesn't stop Bobby, otherwise known as Kid President. Watch the YouTube video "The True Story of Kid President," ([bit.ly /KidPresidentsDream](https://bit.ly/KidPresidentsDream)) and ask the children to pay attention to Bobby's dream.

After the video, give each child a copy of **GN 3** and markers. Invite them to complete the prompt, "I have a dream to . . ." and write or draw a picture of the dream God may be giving them to make the world a better place.

Gather the children in a circle and have them hold their pictures in front of them. Invite them to respond to each line of the following prayer with "God, I offer myself to you."

God, you call us, just like you called Jeremiah and gave him your message.

God, I offer myself to you.

You call us, just like you gave Bobby a dream to make the world a better place.

God, I offer myself to you.

Sometimes we don't feel like we are enough or have enough, but that doesn't matter because you promise to be with us.

God, I offer myself to you.

God, hear the dreams that you have given us . . . *(have the children take turns sharing their dream response)*

Almighty God, we thank you that you call us, you give us dreams, and you are always with us. **Amen.**

Note: bit.ly web addresses are case sensitive.



- T** *When lining up, consider setting an order each time. For example, one time have children wearing blue line up first, another time have children whose names start with J line up first. Engaging them while they transition lends order and draws attention away from undesired behavior.*

Extra Activity

LD

Remind the children that Jeremiah listened to the words God shared and then Jeremiah was called to share the words with others. Have the children form a line. Invite the child at the left end of the line to whisper a phrase from today's story to the child on their right. That child will pass the phrase along the line, continuing until the phrase gets to the other end of the line. The child at the end of the line shares what they heard with the group. Play additional rounds, letting all who wish start the phrase.

Invite the children to share the words with family and friends, just as Jeremiah did.

LOVING AND SERVING GOD

LG

Ask the children to help clean up the space.

Recall that today we heard about Jeremiah answering God's call.

Sing together "Every Time I Feel the Spirit"—**MM 13; SCM 19**.

Invite the children to imagine ways God may call them to share a message:

- ▼ What might the message from God be?
- ▼ Who might they be called to share it with?

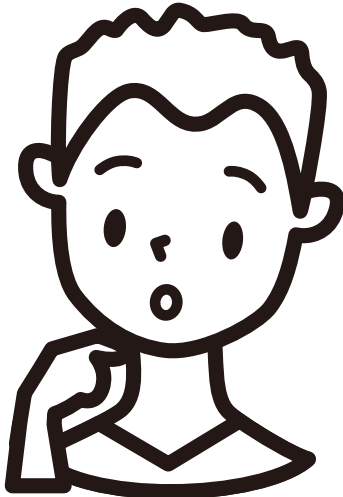
Offer a few moments of silence as the children consider this call. Tell them they will get the chance to voice their ideas during the prayer.

Offer a prayer:

Holy God, thank you for inviting us to join you in your work. When you ask us to be your messenger, sharing messages such as (*prompt the children to name their ideas*), help us to respond: "I will go! Send me!" Amen.



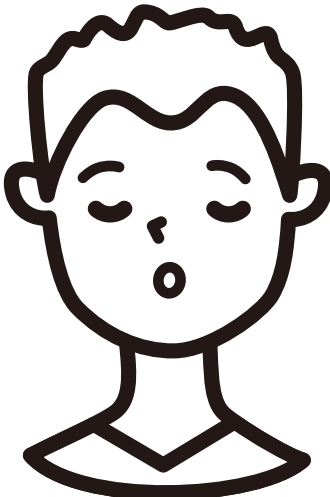
Ask parents and caregivers for their email addresses so you can send the Grace Sightings link, or invite them to visit www.pcusastore.com/GGGdownloads. Remind the parents and caregivers about the story audio (see p. vii).



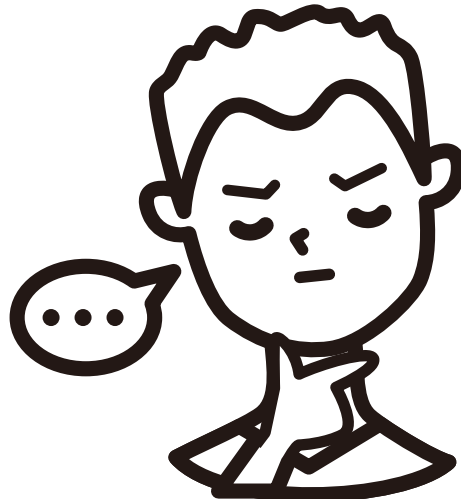
surprised



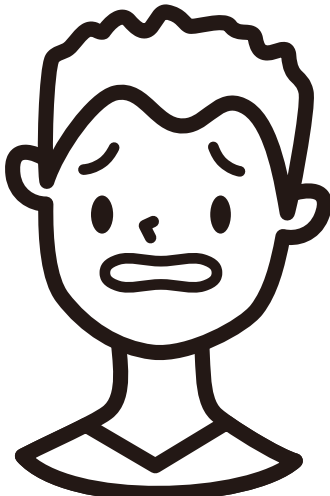
determined



sleepy



concerned



worried



happy

Jeremiah Script

Team J (or an individual):**God, do you know me?**

Team G (or an individual):

Before you were born I knew you and called you!

Team J (or an individual):**What?! I am only a child.**

Team G (or an individual):

Do not say you are too young.

Team J (or an individual):**What will I do?**

Team G (or an individual):

I will send you.

Team J (or an individual):**What will I say?**

Team G (or an individual):

I will give you words to say.

Team J (or an individual):**I am afraid.**

Team G (or an individual):

Do not be afraid.

Team J (or an individual):**Where are you?**

Team G (or an individual):

I am with you always.

Team J (or an individual):**What will I say?**

Team G (or an individual):

I am putting my words in your mouth.

Team J (or an individual):**God, I am yours.**

