



David Brings the Ark to Jerusalem

Goal: To celebrate God's presence with worship.

RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

. . . In 2 Samuel 6:12b–15, 17–19

The Ark of the Covenant represented the presence of God with the people of Israel. It was an important sacred object because it was a visible sign, or symbol, that the God who had delivered the people from Egypt was continually present now in the community of faith.

King David brought the Ark to Jerusalem, David's city. This led to great rejoicing for the people and the king. David sacrificed an ox and a choice cow. David was "dancing for the LORD with all his might, but he wore only a linen cloth. He and everyone else were celebrating by shouting and blowing horns while the chest was being carried along" (based on vv. 13–15, CEB).

The whole community was celebrating the coming of the Ark and what it meant to the people of faith. Exuberant joy led to festive celebrations. Their faith was their source of joy. King David offered a sacrifice and then "he blessed the people in the name of the LORD All-Powerful. He gave all the men and women in the crowd a small loaf of bread, some meat, and a handful of raisins, and everyone went home" (based on vv. 18–19, CEB). God's grace brought forth the people's gratitude!

. . . In Your Children's Experiences

The visible symbol of the Ark of the Covenant helped David and the Israelites remember God's presence with them. Receiving the Ark in Jerusalem was a time of great joy and celebration. Invite the children to name the ways they know God is present with them. Sometimes it happens in worship, or maybe when they see a baptism or participate in communion. Or they might recognize that God is present when they help someone else, extending God's love and care. As children name the places and times when they know God is present, they could offer a response such as, "Thank you, God!"

. . . In Your Relationships with the Children

This is a story full of drama, excitement, joy, and even dancing. Children know what it's like to wait for something and then to experience the event, like a birthday party, sharing joy, fun, and food. As children share their stories, they could also share some of the foods involved, like David did with raisins and bread. Consider extending this celebration to the larger church with the children offering food and blessings to church members on their way to worship.

*Dear God, inspire me through today's story to experience
the joy and wonder of your presence. Amen.*



Supplies

Music & Melodies

bit.ly/GGGMusicMelodies

Stories, Colors & More (SCM) i–iv, 9, 16, 18

basic supplies
(see p. vii)

audio stories (optional)
(see p. vii)

internet-connected
device

candle

green cloth

Ark of the Covenant
with the Ten
Commandments tablets
from Fall 6

2 sturdy paper plates
per child

pea gravel

small dowel rods or
unsharpened pencils

streamers and/or
curling ribbon

Responding

Celebrating

snack food, music for
dancing, **SCM 9**

Extra

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

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**

Welcome each child with, “Grace and peace be with you, (Name).” Prompt children to respond, “And also with you.”

Invite children to help prepare the worship space. Provide a candle, a Bible, a green cloth, and the Ark of the Covenant.

Ask some children to help prepare today’s “Responding in Gratitude” activities. Suggest that one or two prepare to lead today’s singing.

Invite the children to make tambourines. Give each child two sturdy paper plates. Place the two plates on top of one another, bottom sides out, and staple along the bottom curve, leaving a “pocket” opening at the top. Add pea gravel in the “pocket” and continue stapling around edges to close. Show the children how to cover the edges with painter’s tape or duct tape to prevent snags from the staples. Encourage the children to decorate their tambourines.

Provide each child a small dowel rod or unsharpened pencil, streamers and/or curling ribbon, and tape. Encourage them to cut lengths of streamer and/or curling ribbon and secure them to the dowels in order to create streamers they can wave.

Singing

Gather the group together in the worship space. Play “Make a Joyful Noise”—**SCM 18**—and sing along. Encourage the children to use the tambourines and streamers as they sing the song.

Praying

T

Turn on the candle as a reminder of God’s light in the world through Jesus.

Allow for a couple of moments of silence. Invite children to consider and name ways they know God is with them. As children take turns naming God’s presence, lead the rest of the group in shaking their tambourines and saying, “Thank you, God!” in response to each offering.

Conclude by praying,

God of grace, we thank you for your presence. Amen.



T *Transitioning from an activity with movement to a quiet or listening one can be difficult for some children. Alerting them of the change in advance, such as saying, “After this we will be praying,” allows children time to anticipate the change and act accordingly.*

Preparing to Hear the Story

L

Collect the Ark of the Covenant from the worship space. Remind the children that the Ark of the Covenant was a box that was very important to the Israelites. Inside the Ark were the Ten Commandments carved on stone tablets. Show the tablets from the box. For the Israelites, this box was the most holy object they had. It served as a reminder that they were God’s people and that God was present with them. They had carried it—and cared for it—for years until the Philistines stole it. Now they had it back and David wanted to move it to Jerusalem, their holy city, and celebrate. Imagine together what it would have been like to carry the Ark wherever they traveled.

Hearing the Story

L F B

Invite a child to find 2 Samuel in the Bible so that the children know the story comes from the Bible. Place the open Bible on the worship table. Read **SCM 9** or listen to the story audio. Conclude by saying, “Word of wisdom, Word of grace,” and prompt children to say, “Thanks be to God.”

Encourage children to mimic the actions in the story: to form a procession (and wave their streamers), to rejoice and sing, to play their instruments, to leap, jump, twirl, and dance as you read the story again. Use your voice and expression to make the story engaging.



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.

Reflecting on God’s Grace

C

Wonder together:

- ✎ I wonder, “What did the scene look like, sound like, even smell like, as David and the Israelites celebrated the return of the covenant box?”
- ✎ I wonder, “Did everyone think it was a good idea for the king to dance and sing in front of his people?”
- ✎ I wonder, “What does this story tell us about David?”
- ✎ I wonder, “How do we celebrate God’s goodness here in our community of faith?”

Singing

Give God an offering of music. Play and sing together “Bim Bam”—**SCM 16**.

Turn off the candle.



RESPONDING IN GRATITUDE

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



Celebrating God's Grace

MS C FA

Read the last two paragraphs on **SCM 9** again. Offer that David led his people in celebrating God with a huge party that included dancing and food.

Play "Freeze Dance." Instruct children to dance freestyle to the music, but when you pause the music, they are to freeze in whatever pose they are striking at the time. Allow for several minutes of play, then invite the group to share a snack together. Offer thanks to God for the snack and the friends to share it with. As children eat, let them talk and enjoy being together.

Wonder together:

- ▼ I wonder, "How long did David's party last?"
- ▼ I wonder, "What do you think God thought of the party?"
- ▼ I wonder, "Is dancing and sharing food to celebrate God's grace worship? Why or why not?"
- ▼ I wonder, "What are different ways we celebrate God in our church?"

FA *Many children have food and other allergies such as peanut, milk, egg, wheat, latex, grass, mold, and others. Be aware of all allergy issues the children may have. Avoidance is the best practice. Provide alternate activities or use options to keep children safe.*

Praying God's Grace

L MS

Lead the group in prayer. Read the following prayer and, at the designated times (*), prompt the children to mimic the motion you have just read. Offer that, in this way, you are praying with words and with bodies.

Dear God, help us to be people
who celebrate your goodness;
who raise our hands* /
in praise to you;
who leap* /
in excitement over your grace;
who spin in circles* /
when we feel full of your love;
and who are not afraid to clap our hands loud* /
when we witness your presence.

Thank you especially for our community of faith for whom
we jump for joy.* /

Amen.



Imagine together ways that you can use your body to pray at home too.

Offering God's Grace

MS

Invite children to make a silhouette picture of David and others dancing as they celebrated. Hang a piece of mural paper on the wall. Have a few volunteers stand in front of the paper in “dancing poses.” Ask children to hold the poses as a leader or other children trace their outline using crayons. Remove the mural paper from the wall and invite the children to color in the silhouettes. Title the mural “We Celebrate God’s Grace.” Find a place in your church where the mural could be hung as an offering for others to remind them that the worshipping community gathers to celebrate God’s grace.

Extra Activity

LD

Hand out copies of **GN 1**, and make **SCM 9** available to the children, if they would like to have it read aloud again. Have the children work individually or in small groups to complete the activity. Invite the children to look at each row of items and ask what the items may have in common. Then ask them to put an X through the item in each row that is least like the others. Finally, ask them to circle any of the items that may have been a part of the celebration in today’s story. Allow time to color the page while you wonder together about what these items may have contributed to the events in the story. Accept all answers.

LOVING AND SERVING GOD

LG

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

Ask children to take turns naming something they enjoyed doing together today. When everyone has had a turn (including you), pray:

Thank you, God, for the grace you share through your people
and for all the wonderful times we have to celebrate you. Amen.

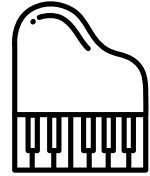
Have the children stand in a circle. Look to the child on your right and say, “God is with you.” Prompt the child to respond with a high five or fist bump, and the words: “And also with you.” The child to your right then exchanges the message of God’s presence with the child who is on his or her right side. The message exchange moves around the circle, passing from child to child and ending with you. Invite all of the children to join with you in saying, “Praise God! Amen.”

Encourage the children to look for times that they feel God’s presence this week.

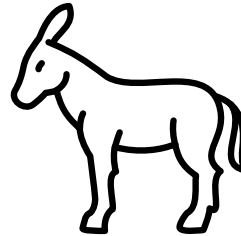
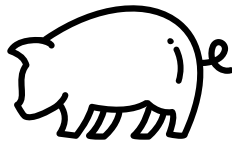
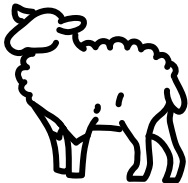


Ask parents and caregivers for their email addresses so that you can provide them with the link to www.pcusastore.com/GGGdownloads, where they can download coloring pages, *Grace Sightings*, audio stories, and songs (see p. vii).

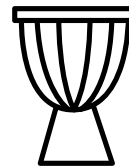
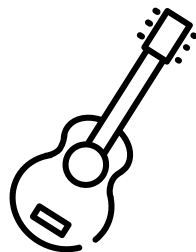
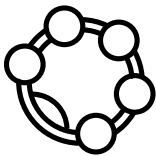
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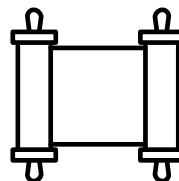
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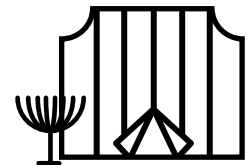
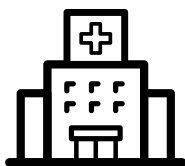
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