



Keep Calm and Speak Boldly

Goal: To tell others about Jesus' grace and love.

RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

. . . In Acts 4:1-31

When the disciples faced opposition from Jewish leaders, they kept calm and spoke boldly. Peter was “inspired by the Holy Spirit” (v. 8, CEB). Peter’s opponents were amazed by “the confidence with which Peter and John spoke” (v. 13, CEB).

Peter was witnessing to his Christian faith. He claimed that a man had been healed by the power of Jesus, a good deed for a sick person but also a great wonder and sign that pointed to the truth of Jesus’ resurrection. Peter boldly proclaimed: “Salvation can be found in no one else. Throughout the whole world, no other name has been given among humans through which we must be saved” (v. 12, CEB). This, of course, was a threat to the leaders and to their entire religious system.

God’s Spirit was with Peter and John, enabling them to testify to the gospel of Jesus. In gratitude, the disciples proclaimed Jesus. In difficult times, they were not left alone. Grace and power were given through the Spirit of God. We are grateful for God’s grace to us today when we say what we believe.

. . . In Your Children’s Experiences

Learning how to speak up, to say the right thing at the right time, is something we all want to do. In this story, children can connect with Peter and John, who were able to stay calm even while speaking boldly. Children can also be helped to remember that God’s Spirit surrounds us when we are afraid and when we are bold.

Most children are eager to be helpers and to please the people who are important to them. Some children will have creative ideas about ways to be helpers and tell others about Jesus. Invite the children to share their ideas, and then incorporate their ideas into their activities.

. . . In Your Relationships with the Children

Imagine being with Peter and John on that day. What stories of Jesus would you have told the crowd? You have been teaching the children so many different stories about Jesus. It would be interesting to invite them to put themselves in that scene and for each one, in a popcorn style, to pop up with a story of Jesus that they remember.

Think about ways the children can be involved at church. What specific activities can you provide that will encourage the children to sing and talk to God, give an offering, learn how God loves them, and tell others about Jesus?

As children continue to grow in their spiritual formation as Christians, you are important in helping them recall and remember the stories that are foundational for their life of faith.

*Dear God, give me the words and a grace-filled heart
to tell the good news to your children. Amen.*



Supplies

Music & Melodies
(MM) 2023-2024

Stories, Colors & More
(SCM) i-iv, 1, 15

basic supplies
(see p. vii)

blanket or mats

snack

Guided Play

choice 1: sheet, scrolls;
plastic pitcher and cups

choice 3: copies of
pictures cut from **Grace
Notes (GN) 1** and **GN 2**

Exploring

choice 1: copies of **GN 3**

choice 2: pictures from
“Guided Play” choice 3,
book about Jesus

choice 3: **SCM 18**,
rhythm instruments

choice 4: copies of **GN 4**

Some SCMs are used throughout the quarter. It is a good idea to keep them in an envelope or folder for further use.

GATHERING IN GOD’S GRACE

Before the Children Arrive

Designate a story corner and lay out a blanket or individual mats for the children so their backs will be to the door.

Post **SCM i-ii**, “Your Visual Schedule.” Cut out and glue the arrow marker onto a clothespin. Use the 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.

Select the activities that will work best for you and for your children. You do not need to do everything suggested!

Welcoming and Guided Play

A B M

Greet children as they arrive and say, “Grace and peace be with you.” Prompt them to respond, “And also with you.”

Introduce yourself to parents/caregivers you do not know personally. Tell them that the children will hear a story about people who told others about Jesus. Invite the children to look at the guided-play activities and pick one to start:

- 1. Playing House Church**—Throw a sheet over the table to make a shelter. Gather under the table with a pitcher, plates, and cups. Bring a Bible or scrolls made from rolls of paper. Suggest to the children that they are serving one another a meal in Bible times. See if they can suggest the foods that might be present and imagine together: What things might Jesus’ friends have had in their house church? What stories about Jesus would they have told? Who would they have told about the stories? Enjoy a pretend meal.
- 2. Going to Church**—Start a conversation about what the children enjoy doing at church with their friends. As much as possible, let the children do the things they mention enjoying. They may suggest building with blocks, playing a game, skipping around in a circle with friends, or playing in the guided-play areas. As the children play, wonder together how they could tell friends about the things we like to do at church.
- 3. Coloring Pictures**—Provide copies of the pictures on **GN 1** and **GN 2** and crayons. Allow time for the children to color one or more of the pictures. Have them imagine with you what might be happening. You may have opportunities to engage the children in conversations about ways to be kind to friends, ways to help at church, and things they would like to tell other people about Jesus.



Transitioning to Story Time

When you sense the children are ready to move into group time, call them to the story corner, singing “Tell Me the Stories of Jesus”—**MM 16; SCM 15**. Repeat words and phrases as seems appropriate.

Tell about Jesus

M MS C

Have children stand in a circle. Invite them to think of one thing they would like to tell others about Jesus.

Children take turns holding an imaginary ball in their hands.

Have one child say the one thing he or she would tell others about Jesus, then bounce, throw, dribble, or roll their imaginary ball to another child.

That child takes a turn to say what he or she would tell others about Jesus, and move the imaginary ball to someone else.

They can make the ball huge, tiny, football shaped, or whatever their imagination dictates.

Come and Listen

L

Invite the children to sit as you sing a simple echo song (to the tune of “Are You Sleeping?”):

Come and listen, /
you and me. /
Listen to the Bible, /
hear God’s Word. /

T *Help the children focus by using the visual schedule—a picture of what we are doing now (e.g., Guided Play), an activity (Activity Choices), or what happens next (Hearing the Story).*

Hearing the Story

L

Open the Bible to Acts 4 so that the children understand that the story comes from the Bible. Tell the children that they will hear a story about people who told others about Jesus. Place the open Bible in front of you.

Read **SCM 1**. Express the emotions of the story in your voice, gestures, and facial expressions. Conclude the story by prompting the children to say, “Amen.”

Invite the children to act like Peter and John and to tell an amazing story about Jesus. In a popcorn style, encourage children to pop up with a story of Jesus that they remember. Praise the children’s efforts to remember and tell the stories of Jesus.

Prompt the children to name ways they can tell and teach others about Jesus. Ask them the following questions:





- ▾ What are ways we can learn about Jesus?
- ▾ What are ways we can share Jesus' love with others?

EXPLORING GOD'S GRACE

1. Keep Calm

FM

Remind the children that Peter and John kept calm under stressful circumstances. Wonder together how they kept calm.

Ask the children what might be some situations in which they need to keep calm. Suggest that there are ways to help them keep calm. Hand out copies of **GN 3** and invite the children to color the pictures. As they do, have a conversation about each calming technique, who has tried it, and how it has worked for them. When they have finished coloring, invite the children each to choose a calming technique they would like to try.

Comment that, no matter what they do to keep calm, they should remember that God is always with them. That's what Peter and John did, and it was the best calming technique there was. Have the children respond, "Always!" when you say, "God is with you . . ." Say it at random times throughout the session.

2. Role Play

C B

Invite the children to look at the pictures they colored in "Guided Play" choice 3. Ask them what they think the people are doing in the pictures.

Guide the children to focus on the individual pictures with wondering statements such as:

- ▾ I wonder, "What might this person be doing to help someone?"
- ▾ I wonder, "What might this person be saying about Jesus?"

Ask them which ones they think are doing something that Peter and John did. (Peter and John preached, taught, and healed people, though they weren't doctors.) If the children are interested, encourage them to role-play the people in the pictures. You may want to provide props, such as a Bible or a book about Jesus. This will give the children the opportunity to role-play helping, needing help, and telling and hearing about Jesus.



3. Sing for Joy L

Tell the children that Peter and John were filled with the joy, peace, and love of Jesus. Play and sing together “I’ve Got the Joy, Joy, Joy, Joy”—**MM 22; SCM 18**. Sing it again, adding motions for the words *joy, peace, love, where, and down in my heart*. Sing it one more time, giving the children rhythm instruments to play while they sing.

Wonder together:

- ▼ When might singing a song be a good way to keep calm?
- ▼ How might remembering the joy, peace, and love of Jesus help you to speak boldly to others about Jesus?

4. Coloring Page C FM

Hand out copies of **GN 4** and crayons. Invite the children to color the picture. Engage the children in conversation as they color, using the following wondering questions:

- ▼ I wonder, “Why is the man angry with Peter and John?”
- ▼ I wonder, “How do Peter and John feel about being in jail?”
- ▼ I wonder, “What is Peter saying to the man?”

T *This may be a good time for some quick physical activities, such as squeezing hands together, stretching, and so forth.*

LOVING AND SERVING GOD FA

Encourage the children to help clean up by using this simple rhyme:

Child of God, child of grace,
clean your place.
Child of God, child of grace,
make a clean space!

Have each child put away one toy or object. Invite everyone to sit around a table or on the floor. Enjoy a snack.

Celebrate the story by giving thanks for people who tell us about Jesus. Invite the children to share their thoughts and ideas about the story and the session.

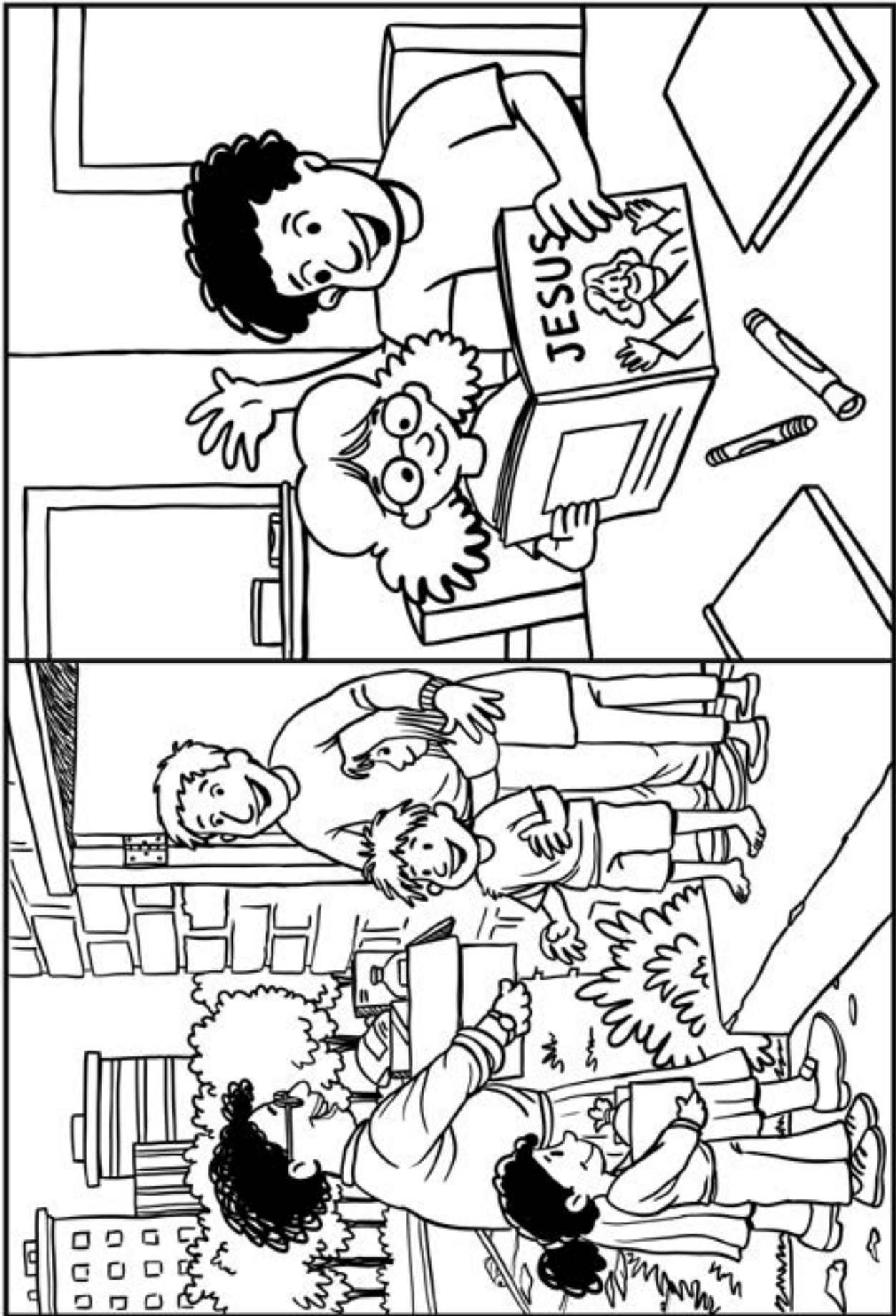
Ask the children to think of ways they can tell others about Jesus. Ask them to name one person they will tell about Jesus later today.

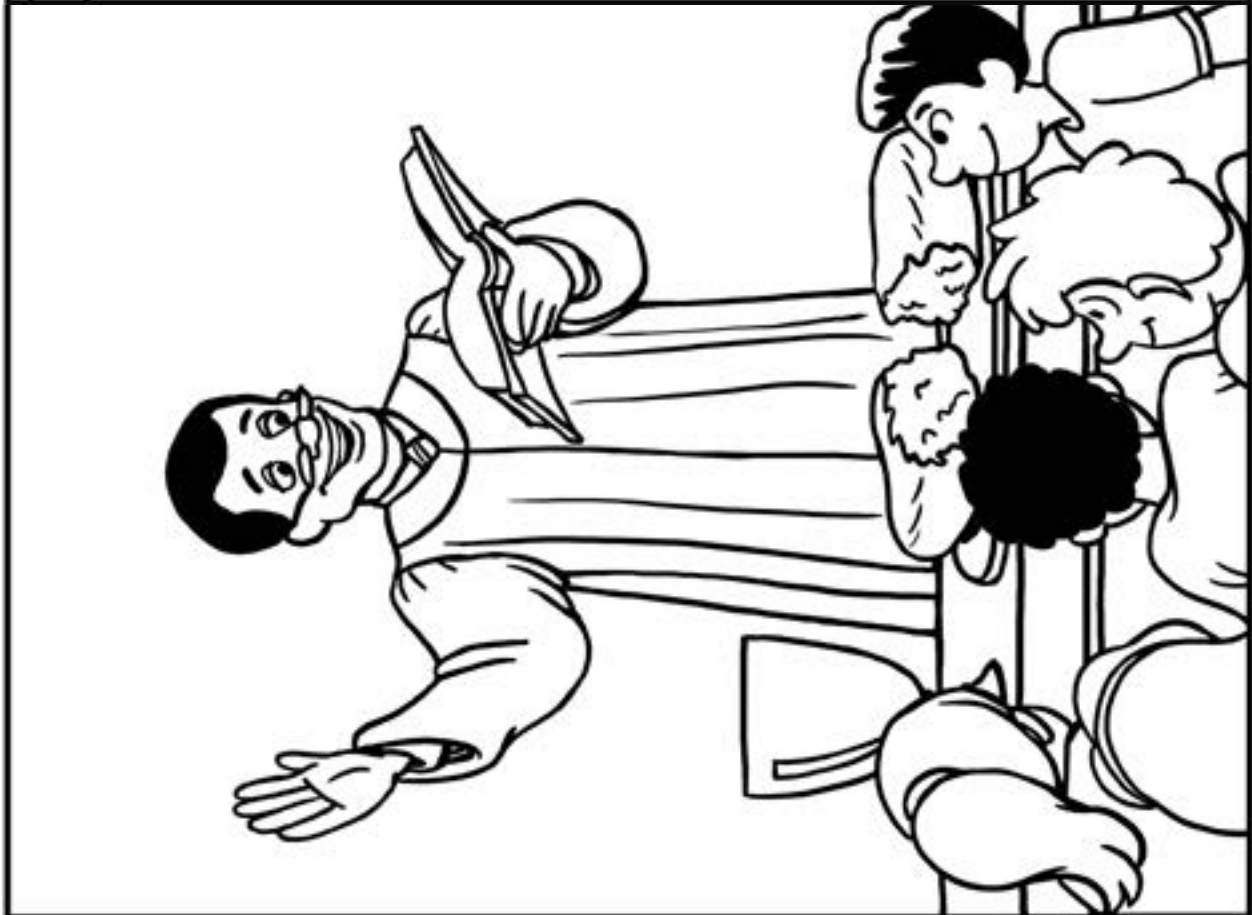
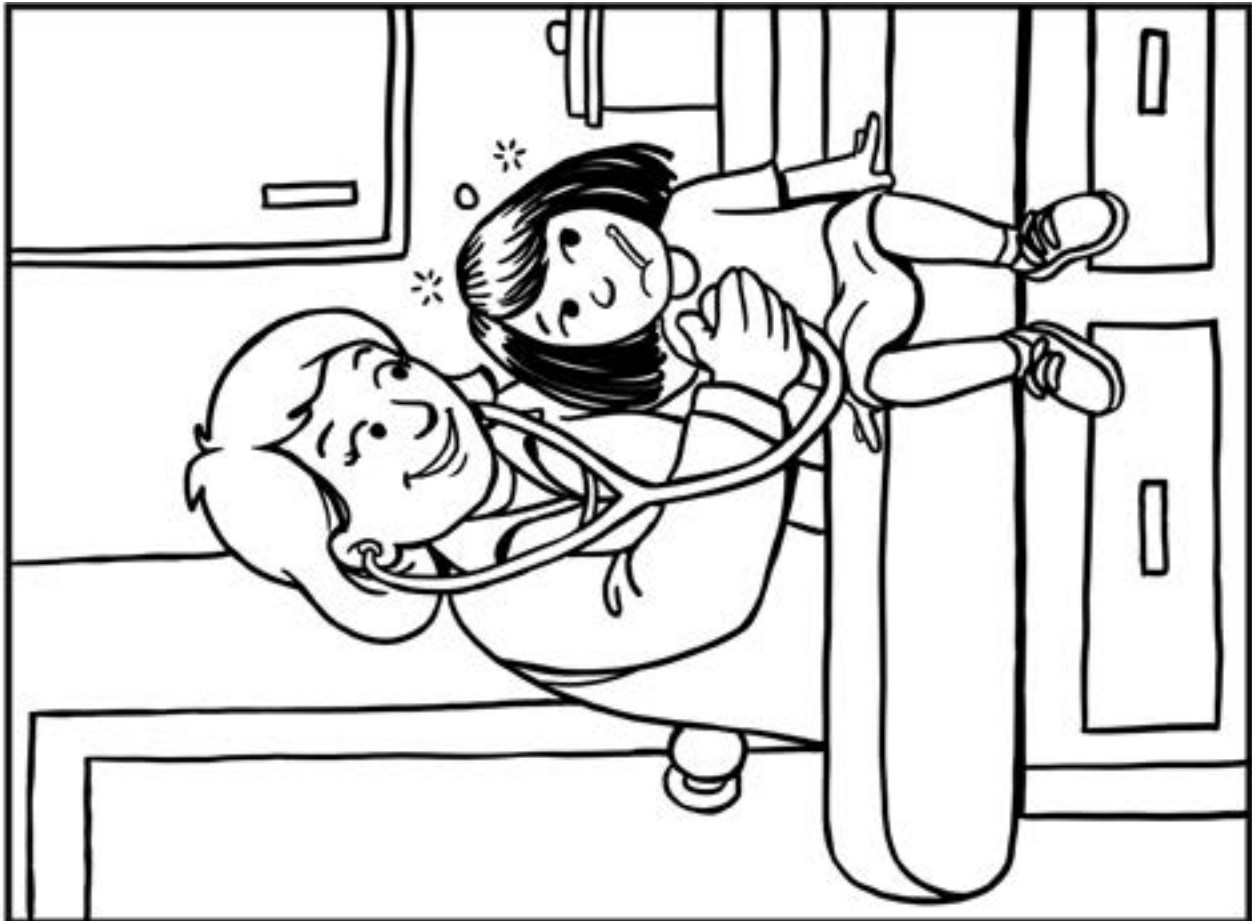
As the children leave, bless them: “(Name), show your love for Jesus and for others every day. The grace of God is with you.”

Use *wonder* questions that do not force a child to remember facts. Wondering questions help a child think aloud. Answers are neither right nor wrong. They help teach children to speak from their hearts.



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).







color or draw



think happy thoughts



take deep breaths



talk to someone



make a list of choices



set the timer and
take a break



look at photos



read



be with a pet



sing a song



take a walk or exercise



say a prayer

Keep Calm and Speak Boldly



Peter and John keep calm while they boldly tell others about Jesus.

