



Spreading the Good News

(based on Luke 4:16–30)

Jesus was in the synagogue, a place where Jewish people worshiped God and listened to God's word in the Scriptures. When people gathered in the synagogue, they covered their heads as a sign of love and respect for God.

The people wanted Jesus to read to them. Jesus read aloud the words of one of God's prophets, Isaiah:

God's Spirit is upon me.

God has chosen me to tell good news to the poor,

to bring freedom to those who are in prison,

to help the blind see,

and set the captives free,

to proclaim that this is the year that God will act.

Jesus rolled up the scroll and said, "God sent me to tell you that God loves you and all other people too."

The people were amazed at what Jesus said.

But then they began to think about the words Jesus said. The people did not believe what Jesus was saying about God's love, and they began to grumble at him.

"Why are you talking like this?" they asked Jesus. "Everyone knows God doesn't love people who are poor or sick, or who live in other countries, as much as God loves us!"

Jesus answered them, "God has sent me to show you that God's way is love for all people!"

The people shouted, "Don't talk about those other people! We don't even know them! Just tell us how much God loves us!"

The people continued to grumble. Then their grumbles turned to shouts. Then their shouts turned to shoves. They ran at Jesus and tried to chase him out of the synagogue.

"Get out of here, Jesus!" the people shouted.

Jesus quietly walked away, and the people were not able to hurt him. Jesus left the synagogue that day, but he did not stop telling people and showing people all about God's love.

This was the start of Jesus' work. Jesus had come to preach the good news. He had come to heal the blind. He had come to set people free. Soon the good news would go out into the world. God's great work of love started with Jesus, and now it was spreading everywhere.



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Use one or more activities from each section to explore grace and gratitude with your children this week.

Recognizing God's Grace

- Read and enjoy the story with your children—imagine and wonder.
- The people wanted Jesus to read to them. Ask your children who reads to them, and talk about how special it is when someone offers to read to you. Do you have memories of special people reading to you?
- Look at the picture below. Wonder why one group of people (inside the synagogue) are unhappy and another group of people (outside the synagogue) are happy.



Responding to God's Grace

- Wonder what kinds of people we forget that God loves, and what will change in us when we remember that God loves everyone.
- Jesus walked quietly away when the crowd grumbled at him. Talk with your children about when it's best to also walk quietly away. Let one child walk away while the rest of the family tosses soft objects, symbolizing grumbling, at that child. (*Choose something like rolled up socks, or sponges, and use a room without breakables.*) Practice walking away quietly.

Celebrating in Gratitude

- Visit presbyterianmission.org and search for “blind ministries” and “blindness.” Give thanks for the work of our church.
- Search for information about the Innocence Project. Share stories of people who have been released from prison because their convictions have been overturned due to new evidence. Give thanks for people who are concerned about those in prison, and who take action to help them.
- Pray the following prayer each day this week:

Thank you, God, for loving everyone, and for spreading your love everywhere. Amen.