



Grain on the Sabbath

(based on Mark 2:23–28)

One Sabbath, Jesus and his disciples were enjoying a relaxing day. They knew that God created the Sabbath to be a special day for people to enjoy. It was a day set aside to worship God and rest.

Jesus and his friends decided to go for a walk. They passed through a field of grain. The grain waved back and forth in the warm breeze.

It was lunchtime and everyone was hungry, so they picked some stalks of grain to eat. They rubbed the heads of grain back and forth in their hands.

Finally, the husks rubbed off. The disciples blew them away and tossed the kernels into their mouths. The crunchy grain tasted delicious!

They were having such a lovely, relaxing day.

But not everyone was happy. Some religious leaders were watching Jesus and his friends. They saw the disciples picking the grain and got upset.

“It isn’t right,” they said. “Jesus’ friends are doing work on God’s special day.”

“Why are your followers picking the grain?” they asked Jesus. “You know it’s against the rules to do that on the Sabbath day.”

Jesus could see that the Pharisees didn’t understand the Sabbath. So he reminded them about one of their faith stories.

“Do you remember our great king David?” Jesus asked. “Remember the time that David and his men were hungry because they had no food to eat? David ate the special temple bread that is only for the priests. Then he gave some of the bread to his men, so they wouldn’t go hungry either.”

The religious leaders nodded their heads. They knew the story well.

“David and his men were allowed to eat that bread because they were hungry,” Jesus continued. “In the same way, we can pick and eat the grain on the Sabbath when we are hungry. The Sabbath is a gift for us. We shouldn’t weigh it down with all these rules and regulations.”

Jesus and his friends went on their way and continued to enjoy the day. They had a big job to do, but on the Sabbath day they were glad to rest.



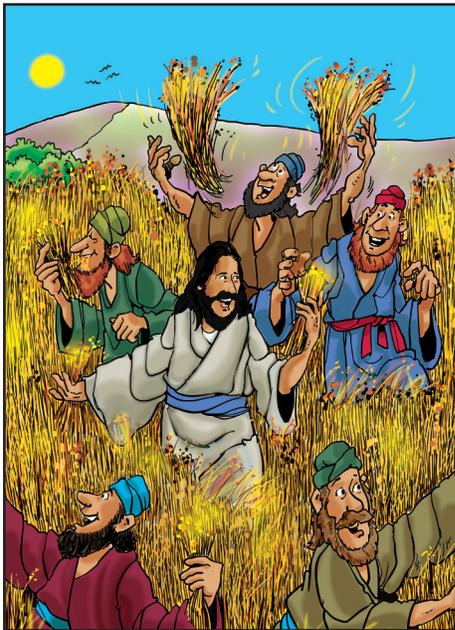
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Use one or more activities from each section to explore grace and gratitude with your children this week.

Recognizing God's Grace

- Read and enjoy the story with your children—imagine and wonder.
- Brainstorm with your children as many useful rules as they can think of. Imagine what would happen if no one followed these rules.
- Talk with your children about the purpose of rules, and give them some situations where they would honor God by not following a rule. Discuss if or when it is necessary to not follow a rule.



Responding to God's Grace

- Memorize “Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy” (Exodus 20:8). The Sabbath is to remember God’s blessings and rest in God. It is not necessarily about taking a break or a nap, but being fully attentive to God. Helping another person in need, as Jesus did, doesn’t break a commandment; it fulfills being in tune with God.
- Wonder together what you can glean from your kitchen cabinets or closets to give to others in need. Or what needs do you have that can be helped by others loving you as their neighbor? Gleaning is about being a receiver of what is needed in the here and now.

Celebrating in Gratitude

- Find ways your family can have Sabbath together. Disengage from technology and do something together. Here are some examples: Take a walk. Pick up trash in the neighborhood. Start an easy-to-grow houseplant and plant it in a pot. What activities would work for your family?
- Make a point to eat together on the Sabbath. If possible, serve food that everyone likes. Sit at the table. Use real dishes. Allow every person to mention their high and low event from the past week, and articulate a goal for the coming week.
- Pray this prayer:

God, thank you for your love and care in giving rules for us to follow, and for teaching us that sometimes rules must be broken to be faithful. Help us to know when to follow the rules and when to break them. Amen.