



God Makes a Home

Goal: To show gratitude to God for the gracious gifts of creation.

RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

. . . In Genesis 2:4b-9, 15-23

Genesis 2 tells of a lush garden planted “in the east” (v. 8) that is watered from below, in striking contrast to the sparse rainfall of the region. The tree of life (v. 9) confers eternal life while the tree of the knowledge of good and evil confers wisdom. God put in the garden every tree that was both beautiful and could provide food for human beings.

God does not create people to be static; verse 15 says that the human being was put in the garden “to till it and keep it.” The Hebrew word usually translated “man” or “the man” is *adam*, a generic term meaning “human being.” This is also a play on words—*adamah* means “ground” or “soil,” the substance from which human beings are created. The differentiation of the sexes does not occur until verse 23. There the Hebrew words *ish* (man) and *ishah* (woman) are used to show how the two are connected by their very names, as well as by the bones from which they are formed. The story underlines the mutual dependency of men and women.

. . . In Your Children's Experiences

God provides a home for human beings that includes everything pleasant both for food and in appearance. The children in your group may ask: “How did God do it?” Some children may be able to compare this to the kind of provisions their parents and caregivers make for them. Others, sadly, will not. Not every child will relate immediately to the image of a garden as a positive place of joy and peace. Be prepared to help them think about the kind of environment that is safe and welcoming for them. Older children, especially, can understand the value of unspoiled natural beauty. They may be eager to make a difference by caring for the environment and helping bring it back to the kind of world God intended.

. . . In Your Relationships with the Children

One of the aspects of the creation story is the birth of human beings—male and female. Be sure to affirm to children that we all are created in the image of God. Neither gender is more important in God's eyes. We also are encouraged to be caretakers of the world. These are important messages in a world where nature is often exploited and women are sometimes treated in unfair ways.

Do not underestimate your importance as a role model for the children you teach. How they respond to the issues raised in this lesson may be influenced by the way they perceive you are responding. Do you appreciate the world God has created? Your excitement and enthusiasm for the graciousness of creation may arouse in your children an interest that could become a lifelong adventure for them.

*O God, I pray that the children and I will experience
the love and care that you intend for us. Amen.*

Supplies

Music & Melodies
(MM) 2021–2022

Stories, Colors & More
(SCM) i–iv, 1, 9, 14, 21

basic supplies
(see p. vii)

e-book or story audio
(see p. vii)

green blanket

thread or fishing line

candle

rhythm instruments
(optional)

blindfold

Responding

Praying

ball or stuffed animal

Extra

copies of **Grace Notes**
(GN) 1 and GN 2

small items for bingo
markers

GATHERING IN GOD’S GRACE

Before the children arrive, post **SCM i–ii**, “Your Visual Schedule.” Cut out and glue the arrow marker on 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.

Welcoming and Preparing

Play “Dance and Sing”—**MM 9**—as children arrive. Welcome each child with “Grace and peace be with you, (*Name*).” Prompt the children to respond, “And also with you.”

Invite the children to make a garden scene in your space. The following ideas may be helpful:

- ▼ Place a green blanket on the floor.
- ▼ Make a sun from yellow construction paper and clouds from white paper. Hang them from the ceiling with thread or fishing line or tape them to a wall.
- ▼ Cut out leaf-shaped name tags from green construction paper. Make a name tag for each person, including the leaders.
- ▼ Gather objects from outside, such as sticks, leaves, rocks, and so forth (nonliving items), enough for each child to have one.
- ▼ Create a worship space in the center of the garden with a candle and a Bible.

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

Singing

SD MS

Play, listen, clap, and dance to “Dance and Sing”—**MM 9; SCM 21**. If you have rhythm instruments, have the children play with the song.

Praying

Invite the children to sit in the garden they have made. Have children say their names and share one highlight from their summer. Ask the children to print their names on leaf-shaped name tags. Ask the children to wear the name tags. Make sure the leaders wear name tags too.

Turn on the candle as a reminder of God’s presence. Invite the children to share one glad thing (a happy moment) and one sad thing (something of concern or worry) from their week. Prompt the children to respond accordingly to each thing shared with “Praise God!” or “Hear our prayer, gracious God.” Affirm each child’s response and respect those who do not wish to share.

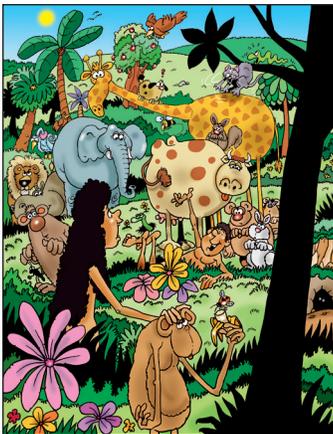
Some SCMs are used throughout the quarter. It is a good idea to keep them in an envelope or folder for further use.

- C** Give children time to respond and to share; for some children, listening and speaking may take longer.

Preparing to Hear the Story **C L**

Play a name game. Begin by saying, “God made me, and I am (Name).” Then invite the child on your left to say, “Thank you, God, for (Name—saying the name just spoken). God made me, and I am (Name).” Continue around the circle until all the children have added their names.

Explain that today’s story comes almost at the beginning of the Bible and that it takes place as God is creating the earth. Note that in the story, a person names everything in the world. Wonder aloud what names the children might have chosen for what we call a monkey, a palm tree, a ladybug, a waterfall, and a daffodil.



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), pcusastore.com.

Hearing the Story **L**

Invite one of the children to find Genesis 2 and place the open Bible on the worship space.

Encourage the children to listen to what is created by God in the story. Read **SCM 1**. Use your voice, your expressions, and feelings to make the story more lively. Vary the tone, speed, and pitch of your voice to indicate changes in mood.

Conclude the reading by saying, “Word of wisdom, Word of grace,” and prompt the children to say, “Thanks be to God.”

Provide crayons or markers and construction paper. Reread the story, or use the story audio. Invite the children to draw a favorite flower, tree, or item from nature as the story is read. Ask the children to share their pictures, if they would like to do so.

Reflecting on God’s Grace **C MS**

Ask a child to draw a face on a paper plate. Place a loop of masking tape on the back of the plate. Draw a person on mural paper, not including a head, and hang the figure on a wall at a child’s height.

Invite the children to finish creating a person by adding the head on the figure using the paper plate. Blindfold one child and spin him or her around once or twice. Give the paper-plate face to the child and point the child toward the figure. After the child attaches the head, take off the blindfold to view the creation.

Wonder how the children would feel if they were the only person in the world. Wonder who else they would want God to create? Invite the children to draw pictures of the people they would want God to create on the mural. Consider providing paper plates for the heads of the people they added.

Singing

Play, listen to, or sing “All Creation God Made”—**MM 1;SCM 14**—and celebrate how God’s creation is a gracious gift to all people. Turn the candle off.

RESPONDING IN GRATITUDE

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

Claiming God’s Grace M SD

As a way to name things in creation and give thanks to God, play a variation of “Duck, Duck, Goose.” Invite everyone to sit on the floor in a large circle.

- ▼ Tell the children to take turns naming a part of creation, with the phrasing, “I am a cat,” “I am a waterfall,” “I am a planet,” and so forth as a person walks around the outside of the circle.
- ▼ Ask one person to walk around the outside of the circle, saying, “Thanks,” while tapping a child’s head after he or she has named a part of creation.
- ▼ Or the child may tap a head and say, “Thank you, God!” Then both children race around the circle to reach the open space. The person who sits in the empty spot first names a way we can thank God for creation.
- ▼ Play until everyone has been tapped with “Thank you, God!”

Celebrating God’s Grace LG A

Explain that God did not stop creating after the first two people. God even created the children in your group! Ask such questions as:

- ▼ Why do you think God created more people?
- ▼ Some of the people God created are your friends. How do you show your friends that you care for them?

Help the children thank God and celebrate God’s gracious creation by making puppets. Suggest that they can make a puppet of themselves, a family member, or a friend.

- ▼ Cut out the inside circle of a paper plate for the face.
- ▼ Draw faces on the paper circles.
- ▼ Add hair by attaching yarn.
- ▼ Tape the faces to craft sticks.

Children who finish early can use the puppets to tell the story of how God created the first person. Invite the children to play with the puppets, asking one another what they would name other items in creation, as you did earlier in the session, or how they would care for creation. Encourage children to take their puppets home to tell their families about God’s creation.



- A** *Adapt any activity to suit your children's needs. Ask yourself, "How can I change this activity so this child can do it?"*

Praying God's Grace

A M

Prompt prayers of thanksgiving to God with a game.

- While sitting in a circle, invite the children to pass a ball or a stuffed animal from one to another.
- Play "Dance and Sing"—**MM 9**—as the children pass the object to the rhythm of the song.
- Pause the music. The child holding the object names something God created, saying, "Thank you, God, for making . . ."
- Continue playing until everyone has had a turn.

Wonder together what the children would miss most if God had not created it. Close with a prayer of thanks to God for all creation.

- LG** *Focus on the children as gifted members of your community. Look for opportunities for them to express generosity.*

Extra Activity

L

*Before the session, cut apart a set of game pieces from **GN 2** and put them in an envelope.*

Play a game to reinforce God's creation and our gratitude for it. Provide copies of **GN 1** and **GN 2**, crayons, scissors, and glue for the children. Allow time for the children to color the Creation Bingo pieces. Have each child cut apart their pieces and glue them as they choose in the spaces on the Creation Bingo board. Note: they will not use all of the pieces.

Describe for the children the patterns that make a Bingo—a traditional horizontal, vertical, and diagonal row and then other configurations such as postage stamp (four together in a corner) or four-corners. Announce one of the configurations for the children to fill. Pull one game piece from the envelope, describe it, and show it to the children. The children will cover their matches with small objects or paper squares. Have the children call "Thank you, God!" when they have a Bingo. Continue playing until everyone has a Bingo. Repeat playing the game with different configurations.



Ask parents and caregivers for their email addresses so you can send the Grace Sightings link, or invite them to visit gracesightings.org. Remind the parents and caregivers about the e-book and story audio (see p. vii).

LOVING AND SERVING GOD

LG

Ask the children to help clean the space.

Encourage the children to think quietly about one thing they can do this week to care for the world around them. Invite them to share their ideas as they wish.

If the children gathered natural objects during “Welcoming and Preparing,” invite them to each choose one of the natural objects to take home as a small reminder of God’s creation.

Ask each child to name one thing for which he or she is thankful. After each person speaks, prompt the rest of the group to say, “Praise God!”

Send the children saying to each child, “(Name), take care of God’s creation.”

Remind the children about the free e-book and challenge them to share the story with someone during the week.

CREATION

B I N G O



