



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, 14, 21

basic supplies
(see p. vii)

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

green blanket

candle

thread or fishing line

items from nature

Responding

Celebrating

pre-made cookie dough,
sugar, raisins, waxed
paper, rolling pins or
drinking glasses, cookie
cutters in animal and
people shapes, spatula,
cookie sheets, oven

Praying

small object

Offering

blue and green paint

Extra

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

small items for bingo
markers

Some SCMs are used repeatedly 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, 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.

“Celebrating God’s Grace” requires more prep.

Welcoming and Preparing

LG A

Play “Dance and Sing”—**MM 9; SCM 21**—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 later.
- ▼ Create a worship space in the center of the garden with a candle and a Bible.

Ask a few children to help prepare supplies for today’s activities. Ask two volunteers to practice reading the Bible passage. Invite one or two to prepare to lead today’s singing.

Ask the children—or one or two older children—to print their names on leaf-shaped name tags. Encourage the children to wear the name tags. Make sure the leaders wear their name tags too.

T *For children who struggle with transitions, consider a quick physical activity—such as doing chair push-ups and stretching.*

Singing

T 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 on the green blanket. Turn on the candle as a reminder of God’s presence. Invite the children to share one glad thing and one sad thing from their week. Prompt the children to respond accordingly to each thing shared with “Praise God!” or “Hear our prayer, gracious God.”

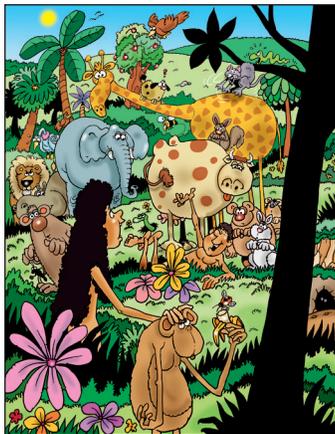


Preparing to Hear the Story C

Play a name game. Begin by saying, “God made me, and I am (*your name*).” Then invite another child to repeat the phrase: “God made you, and you are (*and his or her 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, and a daffodil.

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



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. If two children are prepared to read, have them read Genesis 2:4b–9 and 15–23 aloud. Conclude the reading by saying, “Word of wisdom, Word of grace,” and prompt the children to say, “Thanks be to God.”

Place the open Bible on the worship space.

Read a retelling of the story on **SCM 1** or use the story audio. Use your voice, your expressions, your feelings, and your body to make the story more lively.

Reflecting on God’s Grace MS

After children have heard about creation and the Garden of Eden, ask them what they wonder about in this story.

Place a chair in the middle of the group. Call it the “wonder chair.”

Invite children, one at a time, to sit in the chair and mention something they wonder about in creation, beginning their comment with the words “I wonder, . . .” The following are suggested starters:

- ▼ I wonder, “What existed before the world was created?”
- ▼ I wonder, “Why did God place special trees in the middle of the garden?”
- ▼ I wonder, “How would it feel after God breathed life into us?”
- ▼ I wonder, “Why did God want human beings to take care of the garden?”
- ▼ I wonder, “How is God active in this story?”

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

A FA

Help the children thank God and celebrate God's gracious creation by making cookies in the shapes of animals and people. Have children wash their hands. Give each a sheet of waxed paper and a portion of cookie dough. Provide enough dough for each child to make several cookies. Tell the children to put the waxed paper on top of the dough and roll it out with a rolling pin or drinking glass, then cut out people and animals with cookie cutters. Suggest that they sprinkle the shapes with sugar and add pieces of a raisin for eyes. Bake as directed. Invite the children to enjoy a freshly baked cookie and take a few cookies home to share with their families as they retell the story of the garden. Supply zip-closure plastic bags for their cookies.

If you do not have access to a kitchen, prepare the animal and people cookies in advance and have the children decorate them.

- Ⓐ *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

C M

Prompt prayers of thanksgiving to God with a game. While sitting in a circle, invite the children to pass an object, such as a ball or a stuffed animal, from one to another. Play music as the children pass the object.

Pause the music. The child holding the object names something God created with the words, "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.*

If your group is large, consider making several garlands to hang in different areas of your church.

Offering God's Grace

LG

Have the children create a garland to remind others to recycle as a way of taking care of the earth God gave us.

Cover work surfaces with plastic. Set out watered down green and blue paint. Provide paper from your recycle bin, permanent markers, and brushes.

Have the children write the word "RECYCLE" in large letters with permanent markers on individual sheets of paper. Encourage them to make several sheets. Invite the children to paint over and around the letters with blue paint to represent water. Suggest that they don't need to cover the whole sheet with blue paint. Then tell them to add green paint shapes around, or on top of the blue to represent land. Set the painted paper sheets aside to dry.

When the papers are dry, have the children cut out a shape with the word "RECYCLE" inside each shape. Suggest shapes such as circles (for the earth), hearts, and hands. Tape a length of string or ribbon to the back sides of the shapes to form a garland. Hang the garland in a central area to remind others to care for God's creation.





Extra Activity



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 bingo pieces. Have each child cut apart their pieces and glue them randomly in the spaces on the bingo board. Note: they will not use all of the pieces.

Describe for the children the patterns that make a Bingo—traditional straight and diagonal bingo or other configurations such as postage stamp (four together in a corner) or four-corners.

Pull one game piece from the envelope, describe it, and show it to the children. The children will cover their matches with small objects you have provided. Have the children call "Thank you, God!" when they have a Bingo. Continue playing until everyone has a Bingo.

LOVING AND SERVING GOD



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 each of them to choose one of the natural objects to take home.

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 together, "Praise God!"

Send the children by 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.



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).

CREATION

B I N G O



