



# Share Everything

**Goal:** To explore ways the early Christians worked together and to identify ways we can do the same.

## RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

### . . . In Acts 2:37-47

The dramatic event of Pentecost and the coming of the Holy Spirit to the church led to important actions by Christians in Jerusalem. Believers in the church focused on the apostles' teaching. They dedicated themselves to the community and the rich fellowship of being together. They shared meals together—including the Lord's Supper. They became a community of prayer as they prayed together. This brought "a sense of awe" to everyone as they saw the "many wonders and signs" God was doing through the apostles (v. 43, CEB).

The Holy Spirit brought unity to believers so they "shared everything" (v. 44, CEB). This included selling property and possessions. Believers would then "distribute the proceeds to everyone who needed them" (v. 45, CEB). There was a sharing in "gladness and simplicity" and praise for "God's goodness to everyone" (vv. 46-47, CEB).

The Spirit led to the sharing of all things and supporting the needs of the community. Being a disciple of Jesus affected the way a person lived amid the community of the Spirit, the church. The grace given to Christian believers stirred up a strong sense of gratitude to God and the desire to serve God by serving others.

### . . . In Your Children's Experiences

Sharing is one of the first things we teach our children. We want them to understand that learning how to live with others with kindness, love, and compassion is a good thing. So we help them learn how to share a toy or share a hug. And we teach them this by our actions. Then we help them connect the act of sharing with God's love for them and how one of the most important things God wants is for us to love and care for other people. This story from the early church is a good one to help them learn that the very earliest Christians began their life together by sharing.

### . . . In Your Relationships with the Children

Children of all ages have experienced both the act of sharing with someone and the act of receiving from someone. And this is a great time to invite them to share those stories. When the earliest Christian community lived together, they shared what they had. This story offers a great opportunity to help children look beneath the act of sharing to see what happens. Use questions like, "How does it feel when you share?" or "How did you feel when someone gave you something that you needed?" In this way, children can begin to see how acts of sharing help us grow together in love.

*Dear God, help me to know the beauty of being part of a faith community. In Christ's name. Amen.*



## Supplies

### Music & Melodies

[bit.ly/GGGMusicMelodies](http://bit.ly/GGGMusicMelodies)

### Stories, Colors & More (SCM) i–iv, 1, 21, 28

basic supplies  
(see p. vii)

audio stories (optional)  
(see p. vii)

internet-connected  
device

candle

tablecloth

loaf of bread

cup of juice

bowl of water

simple biblical costumes  
or robes, sheets, old ties,  
and dish towels

## Responding

### Claiming

**SCM 1a**, glued to card  
stock and cut out

### Praying

stones, acrylic paint or  
permanent markers

### Extra

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

## GATHERING IN GOD’S GRACE

Post **SCM i–ii**, “Your Visual 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.

“Claiming God’s Grace” and “Praying God’s Grace” require more prep.

### Welcoming and Preparing **LG** **A**

Welcome each child with “God’s promises are for you, (*Name*),” and prompt them to reply, “And also for you!”

Invite the children to set the scene for today’s story, by pretending they are part of the early church. On a table, place a tablecloth, a Bible, and a candle, as well as a loaf of bread, a cup of juice, and a bowl of water.

Invite the children to create a costume for themselves, as though they were a member of the early church. If your church has costumes they may use these, or each child can create a costume out of robes, sheets, and dish towels. Towels and old ties can be used to make head coverings. Encourage creativity!

Ask some children to help prepare today’s “Responding in Gratitude” activities. Suggest that one or two children prepare to lead today’s singing. Invite a couple of volunteers to practice reading today’s Scripture passage.

### Singing **SD**

Gather in the worship space, dressed in costumes. Play “Lord, I Want to Be a Christian”—**SCM 21**—as the children listen. Play the song again and invite the children to sing and clap along.

### Praying **C**

Turn on the candle. Invite the children to share their favorite thing about church (worship, fellowship, mission times—anything about their church experience). After all have had a chance to answer, ask them to close their eyes and breathe deeply. Then pray:

Loving God, we thank you for church. Thank you for the many ways we have experienced your love through this church and through others who believe in you. Help us to share your love with others. Amen.

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



### Preparing to Hear the Story SD

Say that the costumes the children are wearing will help us pretend we are Christians in the early church. Recall the story of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came to the early Christians as a gift from God. Wonder together about what might have happened after that first day when the Holy Spirit inspired Peter, the other disciples, and all of Jesus' other followers. Their job was to let others know that Jesus was alive, and that God loved the world.

### Hearing the Story LG L

Invite a child to find Acts 2 in the Bible. Have volunteers read Acts 2:37–47. 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 table.

Ask the children to listen especially for action words and make up motions for the action words as you read the story again using **SCM 1** or listen to the story audio. If reading, express the emotions with your voice, facial expressions, and gestures.

### Reflecting on God's Grace FA

Show the bowl of water. Wonder together about how and why the early church baptized new Christians. Point out the bread and cup of juice and remind the children that the early church ate meals together.

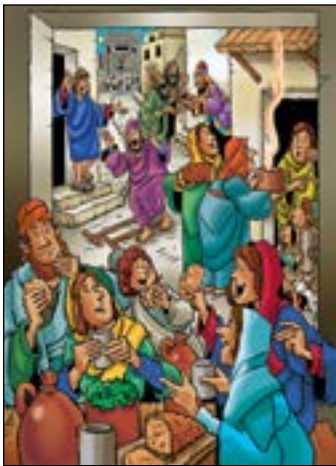
Pretend to be the early church as you let them touch the water, and eat the bread together. Pour juice in cups and pass them around. Reflect together on ways that the church still carries on these actions today.

Point out that the early Christians also shared their money and took care of those who had needs. Wonder together about the ways that happens in the church today. Invite the children to share any examples they have of how Christians share and care for those who have needs.

### Singing T

The early church gathered to worship God. When we sing and pray together, we are also worshiping God! Play “With My Hands Open Wide”—**SCM 28**—and invite the children to worship God by singing together. Turn off the candle.

Following the singing, invite the children to take off their costumes and add them to the worship space. Explain that we will not pretend to be members of the early church anymore; we will play our own part in being the church of today!



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), [www.pcusastore.com](http://www.pcusastore.com).



## RESPONDING IN GRATITUDE

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



### Claiming God's Grace

A LG

*Before the session, glue **SCM 1a** onto card stock. Cut it into enough pieces for everyone in your group, plus extra for guests. (If your class is large and on the younger side, it might be better to make several puzzles of larger pieces and form smaller work groups—one group per puzzle. You might also use the story art from previous sessions.)*

Practice the art of sharing, while solving a puzzle. Pass out the puzzle pieces. Invite each child to hold their piece behind their back while one group member places their piece on the table. Ask:

- ▾ I wonder, “If each person takes a turn doing this, will you ever be able to solve the puzzle?”

Invite all the children to place their puzzle pieces on the table and work to solve the puzzle. Ask:

- ▾ I wonder, “How did sharing help you to solve the puzzle?”
- ▾ I wonder, “What are some other problems that sharing might help solve?”

Invite the children to tell about a time when they helped someone by sharing or when someone helped them by sharing. Look together at the picture on the solved puzzle. Talk about ways that people in the puzzle are sharing. Invite the group to think of ways the church shares with others.

### Celebrating God's Grace

MS C

Play a game to learn about working together. Start with pairs of children sitting back-to-back on the floor. Each pair must work together to stand up. Then join pairs together to make groups of four to do the same task. Continue to add people until the entire group has their arms linked and they stand together.

Experiment with different ways to accomplish the task. Children can form a tight or loose circle, they can change from a circle to a double-sided line, all lean to one side, or all start on one foot. Try the task until the group has found a way to work together quickly.

Discuss the following:

- ▾ What made the task fun?
- ▾ What made standing up difficult?
- ▾ Was it easier to work in small or large groups?
- ▾ When is it better to work together or work alone?



### Praying God's Grace

LG A

Remind the children that the early Christians shared God's love with everyone they could! Place prayer stones in different locations as a way to share God's love. Invite the children to think about people who might need to know God's love—kids at school or in the park, folks in the church or the neighborhood. Invite the children to paint a prayer stone with a message of God's love. Use acrylic paints and/or permanent markers so that the images or messages will last. Gather around the stones and invite the children to repeat the lines from the following prayer:

Lord, we ask you /  
to go with these stones. /  
Help us to remind others /  
through these messages /  
that you love them. /  
Amen.

When the stones are dry, encourage the children to take them and leave them someplace they think someone might need a message of God's love.

### Offering God's Grace

LG A

On a large sheet of newsprint, work together to compile a list of ideas about how the children can offer help during the summer. Some suggestions to get the conversation rolling might be: welcome another child at summer camp, help pass out bulletins at church, or pick up trash on a nature walk. See how many ideas the children can come up with. Affirm all ideas.

Review the list and have the children decide for themselves one thing they can commit to doing. Invite each child to come to the newsprint and cut a "puzzle" piece from it.

Encourage them to turn their piece of the puzzle over and write or draw what they are committing to do. Then ask them to take the puzzle piece home and hang it in a place where they will see it as a reminder of their commitment.

**LG** *Teach kids about the power of teamwork. When kids learn to support others, cooperate, and problem solve as a group, they become better leaders. Serving others helps kids see firsthand that they have the power to make a difference.*



### Extra Activity C

Invite the children to trace both hands on colored construction paper. Share the sheets so that the children each use different colors. Help them to cut out the hands and set them aside.

Hand out copies of **GN 1**. Invite the children to cut the three pieces out and glue the circles to the hands, then decorate the hands by drawing things they can share with others, like the first Christians did. Show the children how to fold the strip accordion style. Help the children to glue the ends of the strip on the insides of the hands. Ask:

- ▾ I wonder, “What do I have that I can share?”
- ▾ I wonder, “How do I feel when I share?”

## LOVING AND SERVING GOD

Ask the children to help clean up the space.

Gather around the worship center. Invite the children to recall some ways that the early Christians tried to live like Jesus. Ask them to recall the action words from the story, and to think of one way that they will love and serve God this week.

Hold hands in a circle and pray together. The leader will use words such as the following:

Holy God, we thank you for loving us, and for inviting us to share that message with the world. Help us to serve you by . . .  
(*Allow the children to name the ways they have chosen to love and serve.*) . . . Amen.

Close by singing together “With My Hands Open Wide”—**SCM 28**. If you made the hands from the “Extra Activity,” ask the children to come up with movements so that they can use them, being careful to not tear them apart. If you did not make the hands, simply ask the children to create some movements for the song.



Ask parents and caregivers for their email addresses so that you can provide them with the link to [www.pcusastore.com/GGGdownloads](http://www.pcusastore.com/GGGdownloads), where they can download coloring pages, *Grace Sightings*, audio stories, and songs (see p. vii).

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