



Keep Calm and Speak Boldly

Goal: To tell others about Jesus' grace and love.

RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

. . . In Acts 4:1-31

When the disciples faced opposition from Jewish leaders, they kept calm and spoke boldly. Peter was “inspired by the Holy Spirit” (v. 8, CEB). Peter’s opponents were amazed by “the confidence with which Peter and John spoke” (v. 13, CEB).

Peter was witnessing to his Christian faith. He claimed that a man had been healed by the power of Jesus, a good deed for a sick person but also a great wonder and sign that pointed to the truth of Jesus’ resurrection. Peter boldly proclaimed: “Salvation can be found in no one else. Throughout the whole world, no other name has been given among humans through which we must be saved” (v. 12, CEB). This, of course, was a threat to the leaders and to their entire religious system.

God’s Spirit was with Peter and John, enabling them to testify to the gospel of Jesus. In gratitude, the disciples proclaimed Jesus. In difficult times, they were not left alone. Grace and power were given through the Spirit of God. We are grateful for God’s grace to us today when we say what we believe.

. . . In Your Children’s Experiences

Learning how to speak up, to say the right thing at the right time, is something we all want to do. In this story, children can connect with Peter and John, who were able to stay calm even while speaking boldly. Children can also be helped to remember that God’s Spirit surrounds us when we are afraid and when we are bold.

Most children are eager to be helpers and to please the people who are important to them. Some children will have creative ideas about ways to be helpers and tell others about Jesus. Invite the children to share their ideas, and then incorporate their ideas into their activities.

. . . In Your Relationships with the Children

Imagine being with Peter and John on that day. What stories of Jesus would you have told the crowd? You have been teaching the children so many different stories about Jesus. It would be interesting to invite them to put themselves in that scene and for each one, in a popcorn style, to pop up with a story of Jesus that they remember.

Think about ways the children can be involved at church. What specific activities can you provide that will encourage the children to sing and talk to God, give an offering, learn how God loves them, and tell others about Jesus?

As children continue to grow in their spiritual formation as Christians, you are important in helping them recall and remember the stories that are foundational for their life of faith.

*Dear God, give me the words and a grace-filled heart
to tell the good news to your children. Amen.*



Supplies

Music & Melodies
(MM) 2020–2021

Stories, Colors & More
(SCM) i–iv, 1, 21, 22

basic supplies
(see p. vii)

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

candle

green cloth

Responding

Claiming

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

Celebrating

sticky notes

Offering

sidewalk chalk

Extra

copies of **GN 2**

Ordinary Time does not refer to this time of the church year as being commonplace or usual. The word comes from *ordinal* referring to numbers and counting, being in order. These Sundays are counted between Pentecost and Advent, and again between Epiphany and Lent.

Some SCMs are used 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.

“Offering God’s Grace” requires more prep.

Welcoming and Preparing

M LG

Greet the children by name and with the words “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.” Smile and acknowledge your pleasure in seeing them.

Invite the children to help prepare the worship space. Ask the children to include a Bible, a candle, and a green cloth (the liturgical, or church year, color for what is called Ordinary Time). Wonder why green might represent this time in the church year.

Ask some children to help prepare today’s “Responding in Gratitude” activities. Suggest that one or two prepare to lead today’s singing. Today’s passage is lengthy. Decide if you will have children read from the Bible or use **SCM 1**. Invite several volunteers to practice the reading for today.

Play a game together. Gather the children in a circle, seated either on the floor or on chairs. Explain that as you play “Tell Me the Stories of Jesus”—**MM 16**—the children will pass a Bible around the circle from one child to the next. Each time you stop the music, the child holding the Bible names a person from the Bible. If the child can’t think of anyone in the Bible, invite other children to help him or her. If Peter and John are named, mention that they play roles in today’s story. This is not a game of elimination.

Singing

Gather around the worship table. Invite the children to name people, places, and things for which they thank and praise God. Invite them to sing a song of praise and thanks.

Play “Sing Thanks to God”—**MM 23; SCM 22**—inviting children to sing and clap along with the song.

Praying

Turn on the candle, telling the children that Jesus is the light of the world. Invite them to repeat after you as you pray:

Be with us today, God. /

Quiet our minds so we can hear your voice. /

Open our hearts so we can receive your love. /

Create in us grateful hearts that care for your world. /



In Jesus' name. /
Amen. /

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

Preparing to Hear the Story

Invite the children to tell something good that happened to them this week or something good that they did. Ask:

- ▾ What good thing happened to you this week?
- ▾ What good things did you do to help others?
- ▾ When you have good news, who do you tell?

Just as we tell the good news about our week, we can tell the good news about Jesus' love.

Share a story about how you learned about Jesus. Explain that today's story is about two of Jesus' followers and how they told good news about Jesus to others.



Hearing the Story

Invite one of the children to find Acts 4 in the Bible. Ask volunteers to read Acts 4:1–31 or **SCM 1**. 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.

Hand out paper and crayons. Invite the children to select scenes to illustrate, such as Peter and John preaching or Peter and John being arrested/released as you read the story again using **SCM 1** or listening to the story audio.

Reflecting on God's Grace

Once the children's illustrations are completed, encourage the children to display the pictures in story order. Review the story. If possible, invite children to retell the story with their illustrations.

Wonder together:

- ▾ What do you think makes the story of Jesus good news?
- ▾ What do you think are the most important parts of the story of Jesus that should be told?
- ▾ How would you tell the story of Jesus? Could you write it? Sing it? Preach it? Draw it? How would you do it?

Singing

Sing "I've Got the Joy, Joy, Joy, Joy"—**MM 22**; **SCM 21**—and celebrate the joy, peace, and love that you have from Jesus. Add rhythm instruments, if desired.

Turn off the candle.



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

RESPONDING IN GRATITUDE

Select activities appropriate for your group and the time available.

Claiming God’s Grace



Explain to the children that Jesus invites us to tell or show the good news wherever we go. Give each child a copy of **GN 1**. Ask the children to name or draw the places they might go and the people they might meet in a week, putting at least one place and one person in the space for each day. Assist with writing as needed.

After the children have named or drawn their places and people, pair the children to tell each other about their week—the places they go and the people they meet.

Ask the partners to think of what to say or do to tell or show each person in their week the good news of Jesus’ grace and love. Invite the children to practice telling or acting out their ideas for sharing the good news with the people on their chart. Encourage the children to take their chart home. Challenge the children to talk to the people they mentioned and to show God’s love this week.

Celebrating God’s Grace



Like Peter and John, the children can share what they know about Jesus.

Invite each child to get a chair. Arrange the chairs in a straight line with every other chair facing in the opposite direction. Place a sticky note on one or more chairs.

Play lively music like “God’s Love for Us Is Truly Amazing (El amor de Dios es maravilloso)” —**MM 29**—as players march around the chairs. When the music stops, all the players hurry to sit on the nearest chair. The player sitting on the chair with the sticky note tells something he or she knows about Jesus. Repeat until all the children have had a chance to sit on the marked chair(s).

- MS** *Make sure that children with mobility issues are included in all activities. Find ways to adapt activities to ensure that all are able to fully participate. For example, instead of running and moving around the room, suggest that all children sit at arm’s length from one another—either on the floor or on chairs—and do a wave of tags from one person to another as a form of movement around the space.*



Praying God's Grace

C LG

On a sheet of newsprint, print "When . . ." at the top and the response "Holy Spirit, you are with us." at the bottom of the sheet.

Invite children to name situations they might face to complete "When." Print the situations under "When." Encourage the children to think of happy situations as well as troubling circumstances.

When everyone has had the opportunity to name a situation, read them aloud and have the children respond with the refrain after each one.

If possible, arrange to have the litany included in congregational worship. The children might lead it or it could be printed in the church newsletter or on the church's website.

LG *Including the children's work during worship helps them see that they can contribute and that they are members of your community.*



Offering God's Grace

LG

If weather permits and your location has sidewalks or areas for chalk drawings, gather the children outside. Brainstorm together about the stories of Jesus you would like to share with others. Encourage the children to recall the stories of Jesus' ministry they have heard. Provide sidewalk chalk for the children to draw pictures representing these stories on the sidewalk or other areas.

If you are unable to meet outdoors, provide black and/or white construction paper with the chalk. When the pictures are complete, display them in the hallway or where members of the congregation can see and enjoy them.

Extra Activity

C

Before the session, cut out the finger holes from GN 2 for younger children.

Tell the children that they are going to be like Peter and John and share a story about Jesus.

Have the children find a partner. Tell the pairs to decide on a story about Jesus that they will share with the group. Give the children a few minutes to talk about the story and decide what characters they will need.

Hand out copies of GN 2 and crayons or markers. Have them draw and color the figures to go with Jesus in their story. Tell the children that their fingers will be the character's legs. Show the children how to poke a hole and carefully cut out each finger hole. Have them cut out each figure.

Give the pairs a few minutes to practice their stories. Ask for volunteers to tell a story about Jesus.

Encourage the children to tell their story to family members at home.

If more than one pair chooses to tell the same story, encourage the second group to either add different details or guess what may have happened next.



LOVING AND SERVING GOD

Have the children join together in a circle. Ask the children to think of the people who have told them the story of Jesus and offer a personal word of thanks for them.

Close with a simple prayer:

Thank you, God, for Peter, John, and all the first friends of Jesus who told his story. Thank you for all the people who told us about Jesus so we could believe in him. Amen.

Have children cross their right arm over their left so their right hand holds the left hand of the person beside them. Have them repeat the following blessing after you:

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, /
the love of God, /
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit /
be with us all. /
Amen. /

Then all raise their right arm over their head and turn clockwise to their right.

Announce that, now that everyone on the circle is facing outward, we are ready to go out and serve Jesus in the world by finding ways to tell others about his grace and love.



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).

SUNDAY



MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY



