



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

thread or fishing line

candle

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, zip
closure plastic bags

Extra

copies of **Grace Notes**
(GN) 1 and GN 2,
small objects or paper
squares

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.

“Celebrating God’s Grace” requires more prep.

Welcoming and Preparing

A B MS

Play “Dance and Sing”—**MM 9**; **SCM 2**—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 children to prepare to lead today’s singing.

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

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 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.” Affirm each child’s response and respect those who do not wish to share.



Preparing to Hear the Story L C

Gather the children in a circle. Say your first name followed by “and God made me (*an adjective that begins with the same first letter of your name*).” (Example: “I’m Ms. Jones and God made me joyful.”) The person to the right introduces you and himself or herself. (*This is Ms. Jones and God made her joyful. I am Alonzo and God made me amazing.*) Continue 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 LD 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. Then place the open Bible on the worship space. Conclude the reading by saying, “Word of wisdom, Word of grace,” and prompt the children to say, “Thanks be to God.”

Distribute paper and markers to the children. While hearing the story again, invite them to use their imaginations and draw a picture of a strange animal that God may have created but we never knew about. Suggest that they name their animal.

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. After the story, allow time for the children to share their crazy creations.

Reflecting on God’s Grace C

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 midst of the group. Call it the “wonder chair.” Invite the children to take turns sitting in the chair and mentioning something they wonder about in creation, beginning their comment with the words “I wonder . . .” Here are some 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 you?”
- ▼ 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 A

Spend some time exploring the joys and responsibilities that we share in partnership with one another as God’s creation and the care we have for creation.

Post a sheet of newsprint vertically on a wall. At the top print “PARTNERSHIP” in large letters. Print each letter vertically down the left side of the paper. To the right of each letter, draw a long line or leave an empty space.

Work together to name some joys and/or responsibilities related to the word *partnership*, using each letter of the word as the beginning letter for the descriptive word. Encourage the children to call out words and add them to the newsprint.

For example, descriptives for *P* could be *partner*, *pal*, *pact*, *parent*, *promise*, or *person*. (If descriptives for any letter are difficult to figure out, leave the space blank and come back to it later.)

Engage the children in conversation about how partnerships and caring for creation are similar or different today. For example, wonder together what responsibilities were shared in the Garden of Eden and then what our responsibilities are today for God’s garden—the earth. Brainstorm ways the children can actively share responsibility for the care of the earth.

Close with a prayer of thanks to God for all 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?”*



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

Celebrating God's Grace

LG 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.

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

Praying God's Grace

C

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, from one to another. Play music as the children pass the object.

Pause the music. Invite the child holding the object to name something God created, with the words, "Thank you, God, for making . . ." Continue playing until everyone has had a turn or two.

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.

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 Creation Bingo pieces. Have each child cut apart their pieces and glue them—where 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—the traditional horizontal, vertical, and diagonal rows, and then other configurations such as the "postage stamp" (four together in a corner) or one in all 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. Tell the children to 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

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 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 read the story to someone during the week.

CREATION

B I N G O



