Curriculum Catalog 2015-2016



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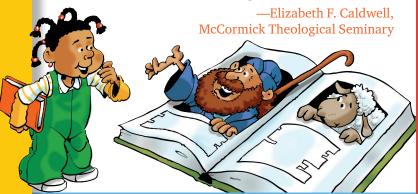
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Growing In Grace & Gratitude Curriculum

"With thoughtful biblical background for the teacher and age-appropriate learning activities, children will grow in their understanding of God's grace as it is revealed through biblical stories."



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Growing in Grace & Gratitude

Each session of Growing in Grace & Gratitude is rooted in Bible stories that reveal God's grace. Children and their leaders will celebrate the meaning of this grace in their lives as they encounter a living God. Through fun activities, prayer, and singing, children will gather in God's grace and learn to respond joyfully in gratitude.

Core Values

- Rooted in the foundation of Presbyterian identity where God's grace and our gratitude are the heartbeat of our faith, life, and worship
- Extends an invitation to discipleship that inspires children to learn and practice hospitality, generosity, and love
- Reaches beyond Sunday morning, encouraging children to live their lives as an expression of God's grace

Features

- Engaging Bible stories based on Scripture reveal God's grace
- Practices hospitality to all children, including leader helps for children with special needs.
- Audio versions of all Bible stories bring God's word to life.
- Two formats available: print and downloadable PDF
- Narrowly graded for children ages 3–10 as well as a multiage option
- Interactive e-book for families to use at home
- Colorful illustrations spark imagination and reveal God's grace for us
- Music CD enhances weekly stories
- Available in English and Spanish
- And much more!

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Why Grace & Gratitude

Educator: I have been hearing about grace and gratitude as a way to articulate our faith as Reformed Presbyterians. Would you tell me a more about this?

Editor: Our inability to articulate our identity is rooted in our history. You can ask any group of pastors and elders, "Why are we called Presbyterians?" Someone will answer quickly, "Because we're ruled by elders." That's the right answer, of course, and it gets to an important affirmation of the parity of teaching and ruling elders that is important to us. Nonetheless, it doesn't really answer the question. Many church traditions have elders in their leadership but don't call themselves Presbyterians. Many churches have presbyteries, or something very much like them, but don't call themselves Presbyterians. Most Reformed churches around the world don't call themselves Presbyterians. We're called Presbyterians because, at one point in our history, the most significant ecclesial dispute was how the church was to be governed.

The late 16th and early 17th centuries in England and Scotland were a time of revolution against the monarchy and vigorous, new debates about how people should be governed. This discussion on governance spanned both state and church. In political matters, some were monarchists, some favored governance through elected representatives, while others wanted a pure democracy. In a parallel discussion in the church, some people believed in government by bishops; others, government by elders; and still others, government by the people of the congregations—hence, the birth of Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Congregationalists. Reformed Christians are known as Presbyterians only in England, Scotland, and their descendants around the world. In this formative period of our tradition, governance was the most important question. The legacy of our origin means we often lead with matters of polity to characterize identity. While this is true, but it is hardly a vision that will fuel decades of ministry.

Educator: So grace and gratitude is our Presbyterian identity?

Editor: What emerges from the core of our identity that compels us to practice Christian community, proclaim the gospel, and work for justice? Grace and gratitude. Grace and gratitude succinctly and winsomely describes the charism, the gift of the Reformed tradition. Each tradition has a gift that it offers to the church ecumenical. Grace and gratitude is our gift to the wider church. Grace and gratitude is our theological and spiritual vision. What is our picture of God? The gracious one who comes to us in creation, in the law, in the prophets, and ultimately in the person of Jesus Christ. The God who sustains us with the ongoing grace of the Holy Spirit. The God who calls us through the church. The God who is for us.

The most profound articulation of this theological and spiritual vision comes from the French baptismal liturgy developed by the Huguenot church in the Reformation:

Little one, for you Jesus Christ came into the world: for you he lived and showed God's love;

for you he suffered the darkness of Calvary and cried at the last, "It is accomplished"; for you he triumphed over death and rose in newness of life;

for you he ascended to reign at God's right hand.
All this he did for you, little one,
though you do not know it yet.
And so the word of Scripture is fulfilled:
"We love because God loved us first."

(French Reformed Church Baptismal Liturgy; Church of Scotland version)

Educator: What was the development process for *Growing in Grace & Gratitude?*

Editor: About eighteen months ago, the editorial staff of Congregational Ministries Publishing was starting to develop a new denominational children's curriculum. Since the development was in the infancy stages, we were evaluating the direction the new curriculum should take. We were certain that it needed to be more than just informational. It needed to be transformational.

We were wrestling with how to develop a curriculum that articulates our denominational identity while encouraging young learners to practice Christian community, proclaim the gospel, and work for justice.

When we heard about the idea of "grace and gratitude" from our colleagues in the Office of Theology and Worship, we knew it was our way forward. We could imagine a curriculum that helps transform the lives of children and those who love them, shaped by grace and gratitude.

Educator: How is this different than previous PC(USA) denominational curricula?

Editor: The key Bible stories that we want children to know are similar to those in any church curriculum, but how the session unfolds reveals the grace of God and our gracious response.

For example, our previous curriculum is based on the children's catechism. To shape a session on the creation story, we would use Question 7: "What did God create? God created all that is, seen and unseen." Children would learn what God creates, but would they experience transformation?

Growing in Grace & Gratitude focuses the session differently. As you read the story of creation, you discover a glimpse of God's grace on the first page, hidden in one little word, spoken repeatedly—good. God names creation, including you, "good"; the Hebrew word tov means "beautiful, bountiful, cheerful, fine, good, grace-filled." God blesses the creation by pronouncing it good. Through the session, children will experience God's grace as a human being, created in God's image, called to be a partner with God and with others in fulfilling the purpose of creation: to glorify God.

Same story, different emphasis—much more transformational!

In grace and gratitude!

Age Levels

Ages 3-5

They play and learn by pretending and mimicking what the adults around them do. Young children learn about spiritual matters the same way they learn about other things—through relationships with caring persons, through their senses, through hands-on experiences, through play, through curiosity. While children this age are literal minded, Listening to stories helps to spark a young imagination.





Ages 5-7

They enjoy engaging with other children rather than just the adults around them. Children of this age pretend and play more imaginative roles outside of those they see in their caregivers. Their imaginations inspire them to craft space ships, be explorers or lions. Many children in this age group are able to read, still at times they may struggle to understand biblical concepts. Encouraged by a sense of wonder at God's amazing ways, they can be reassured of God's love for them a love that does not depend on what they know or understand.

Ages 8-10

Are developing an understanding of abstract concepts. They are able to solve problems more independently and modify behavior based on consequences. They are growing in their desire to join teams and groups and can appreciate how God's Word shapes the identity of members of the Body of Christ. Through their love of questions and learning of God's grace, they can grow in their discipleship, inspired to practice hospitality, generosity and love.



Multiage (Ages 5-10)

A multiage environment is a wonderful place for children of various ages to grow in faith. Differences in the experiences, knowledge, and abilities of the children can be celebrated. It is a joy to observe older children as they help their younger friends. They do so with great pride. As we watch older children respectfully interact with younger ones, we see their potentials unfold. Younger children benefit by modeling actions from their older peers.

Components of Growing in Grace & Gratitude

Leader's Material

Solid biblical and theological background for leaders is found in the first section—Recognizing God's Grace. The weekly text is explored and helps to reveal God's grace in Scripture. Sections 'In Your Children's Experiences' and 'In Your relationships with the Children' provide leaders with a clear understanding of the needs, abilities, and interest of the children.

The leader's material features easy-to-use session plans that are organized in three parts—Gathering in God's Grace, Responding in Gratitude, and Loving and Serving God.

- Gathering in God's Grace—Welcoming and preparing children to hear God's Word. This part of the session includes singing and praying, as well as hearing and reflecting on the week's Bible story. It includes a handy, comprehensive "you will need" list and a thumbnail illustration of the Bible story in the sidebar.
- Responding in Gratitude—A selection of age-appropriate activities for leader's to choose based on the class size and time remaining. Some activities require minimal planning and preparation, while others are noted as "More Prep" and will need advanced planning and/or supplies.
- Loving and Serving God—This sending extends an invitation to discipleship that inspires children and their families to practice hospitality, generosity, and love.

The leader's material is available in two formats: a printed book or downloadable PDE

Each Age-level purchase includes:

- Weekly leader material
- Reproducible Grace Notes*
- Weekly *Grace Sightings* (see page 9)
- Stories, Colors & More
- Free E-book version (see page 9)
- Audio version of the Bible story

*Grace Notes, included in the leader's material, are black and white reproducible resource pages that provide activities/crafts for the session.

Stories, Colors & More

Contains all the color resources needed for each weekly session. This essential component of the *Growing in Grace & Gratitude* curriculum is separated into three sections:

- Stories—Bible stories show colorful illustrations that spark imagination and reveal God's grace for us. Words of the Bible stories are on the back, enabling leaders to read each story without flipping pages.
- Colors—Colorful resources, such teaching pictures and maps to use with children.
- & More—Music lyrics sheets and a Visual Schedule for teachers and church leaders provides useful ideas for involving children with disabilities and special needs, essentially offering a safe place of belonging and acceptance to children who may see themselves as different from their peers. The Visual Schedule touches on supporting children who have difficulty communicating or transitioning, or trouble reading and/ or writing. It offers practical suggestions for working with children who are visually impaired, deaf or hard or hearing, and need mobility support. It also provides tips on celebrating the strengths of children through leadership, generosity, and fairness. Colorful icons are incorporated in each weekly lesson of the Growing in Grace & Gratitude Leader's Material, offering ways to adapt activities for children who have special needs or disabilities.

Stories, Colors & More is included with the purchase of the Leader's Material.



Music & Melodies

This lively and kid-friendly CD includes sing-a-long songs familiar to us all, as well as new tunes such as *Growing in Grace & Gratitude's* theme song, "We are Blessed to Be a Blessing."

Music & Melodies is available for purchase separately. We recommend one CD per age level. "We are Blessed to Be a Blessing" is available as a download on iTunes.

Grace Sightings

Online resources for children to do at home with their parents or caregivers. It includes the story from the week's session and age-appropriate activities. With *Grace Sightings*, sessions reach beyond Sunday morning, encouraging children to live their lives as an expression of God's grace at home and at school.

E-book

A downloadable, interactive *Growing in Grace & Gratitude* e-book is available free on iTunes for families to use at home. The e-book shares the same colorful illustrations and Bible stories used in weekly sessions.

Multiage (Ages 5–10) Sample



Sample Sunday 🥱

Learning to Pray

Help the children learn to pray with assurance in God's grace.

RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE ...

- The Bible and our Reformed tradition stress that God's grace is open to all people, in spite of, rather than because of, their position and status in life. No matter who we are, we never have enough within us to gain God's favor. The good news: we don't have to gain God's favor. God's favor, or grace, is already with us.
- Pharisees were prominent scholars and teachers. The Pharisees worked hard to obey God's law. Jesus had friends among the Pharisees; he didn't universally condemn this group. The Pharisee in the parable is a caricature of sorts, a foil—he pointed out how righteous he was and how much better he was than everyone else. He kept the law and gave away money. He was trusting in himself as being righteous while he "looked on everyone else with
- But the tax collector—hated by others because he worked for the despised Romans—realized he had no righteousness or goodness to bring before God. He prayed, "God, show mercy to me, a sinner" (v. 13, CEB).
- By portraying a tax collector's prayer as more faithful than a Pharisee's, Jesus focuses on the attitude of the supplicant's heart. The Pharisee does all the right things, but he is proud and looks down on others. The tax collector behaves poorly, but with a humble heart he confesses. God's grace encompasses all of us.
- We are grateful that God's grace comes to us no matter what we have done or what we are like. We only need to come before God and ask God to show mercy to us with confidence that God already embraces us and enfolds us in God's love. No matter who we are, we are embraced by God's gracious love. In that assurance, we dare to approach the throne of grace to offer praise, confession, supplication, and thanksgiving.

- Children may not understand God's grace on an intellectual level; however, it becomes real for them as they experience unconditional love and acceptance from you and other adults and youth who tell them about God
- Children know that on some days we feel more deserving of love, and on other days we don't. The good news is that, whether we feel deserving or not, God accepts us and wants us to know we are loved. Knowing they are loved can free children to pray to God in every circumstance.

- You are a spiritual guide. You help children ask their questions, connect their own experiences with Scripture, and see the ways that God's love and grace surround them. Children are able to quickly discern what is real and what is phony. They learn more by watching what we do than by listening to what we say. Your humble stance before God will evoke in them resonance with the parable's message: God's grace calls for humility and
- Help the children learn to pray. Keep prayers short, positive, and meaningful, and use a variety of styles and formats for prayer. Encourage children to talk to God about everyday joys, sorrows, and interests. Affirm that prayer isn't just for times of great sadness or crisis. Prayer is for any time we want to connect with God and talk over what is happening in our lives. Be sure to let children know that prayer can take many forms.

Holy God, guide my thoughts, my words, and my actions in all humility.

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A prayer to focus and center leaders in preparation

A concise goal provides the focus for the session

Solid biblical and theological background for leaders reveals God's grace in Scripture

> Provides leaders with a clear understanding of the needs, abilitities, and interest of their children

for the session



- basic supplies (see p. 00)
- a candle, matches
- sheets of wax paper variety of colorful balloons, one for each
- Stories, Colors & More
- Copies of Grace Notes (GN)1
- downloaded songs from arace@aratitude.org samples
- · e-mail addresses to send the Grace Sightings link (or ask narents/careaivers visit grace@gratitud .org/samples for the

GATHERING IN GOD'S GRACE

Before the children arrive, post SCM 9-10 and cut out and glue the arrow marker on a clothespin. Use the visual schedule to provide clear expectations and a visual cue for the group.

See SCM 11-12 for the key to icons 6 0 0 0 and ways to adapt for children who have special needs or disabilities

Welcoming and Preparing

Greet the children by name and with the words "The grace of Christ be with you." Prompt the children to respond, "And also with you." Post SCM 2. Tell the children that, in today's story, Jesus tells a story about people praying in the temple. Emphasize that the temple was a place of prayer. Ask the children when they pray and what they talk about with God.

Invite the children to transform your space into a place of prayer. Let them make their own decisions by using available objects or drawing pictures.

Encourage the children to include a worship table with a Bible, a table covering, a candle, chairs, and a music player with the downloaded songs. Have them post SCM 5-6.

Post SCM 7-8 near the worship table. Ask older children to practice the Lord's Prayer motions and be prepared to lead the group later

Invite the group to sit at the table. Admire the efforts of the children

Sing "This Is the Day." As you sing, point out the words on SCM 5 so the children can follow along.

Light the cand1 deeply. End Say that Jesus volunteers motions R

> Adapt any can I change

Children are invited into a learing experience trough a

gathering ritual or worship

Through fun activities, children will claim and celebrate God's grace

Handy icon easily identifies activities that require more preparation

Icons help leaders identify activites that may require special consideration for children with speical needs.

Sample 🔿



that in today's story

sin means two things It describes when we

take advantage of or hurt other people

(as the tax collector

did) and when we act as if we are better

than others (as the

Pharisee did).

Preparing to Hear the Story

Open the Bible to Luke 18 so children know that the story comes from

Show SCM 1. Tell the children that the picture depicts Jesus' story. Remind them that the two men in the picture are praying. Ask: What do their gestures and expressions suggest about what they

Hearing the Story

Hand out paper and crayons. Invite children to write or draw pictures as part of their listening. They can share their creations. as part of their installing. They can share their accumulations.

Read SCM 1. Express the emotions of the story with your voice, facial

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

Sing "God Hears Our Prayers." As you sing, point out the words on SCM 6 so the children can follow along. Use repetition. Most

Reflecting on God's Grace

Tell the children that God is gracious and loves all people. God loves

both men who are praying in the temple.

children that God loves us and wants a relationship with ants to communicate with us through prayer. Wonder what God thinks is important about the way we pray. risee's prayer on SCM 1. Have a volunteer hold up ourage the children to exaggerate the attitude of the ugh movement and facial expression.

ger hold up **SCM 4.** Read the tax collector's prayer on encourage the children to exaggerate the attitude of the ough movement and facial expression. Discuss: r which prayer is most similar to the Lord's Prayer

why Jesus prefers the tax collector's prayer. er what is humble about the tax collector's prayer

ory tells us that God welcomes prayers that are h as "I need God"). Encourage the children to name s can express their need for God. o pray an echo prayer:

cho) thank you for always being with us. (echo) now you want us to live. (echo) (echo) Amen. (echo)

> Invites children to consider ways that God's grace is being expressed in the story.

Sidebar notes give suggestions for activity adaptation or additional supportive information

trust God's grace.

Before the session, inflate and tie off balloons, one per person. (Be Celebrating God's Grace

1 For children who struggle with transitions, this may be a good time

encourage appropriate responses.

RESPONDING IN GRATITUDE

shape on the dotted line.

for your group and for the time available.

2. Tear tissue paper into small pieces.

for an adult helper to come close to one or more children to model and

Help the children thank God by inviting them to participate in one or

Make mosaics to illustrate God's grace that forgives us when we

6. If you have a window, tape the mosaics there to dry.

1. Cut out the heart frame on **GN 1**. Cut out the smaller heart

2. Hear tissue paper into sman pieces.
3. Glue torn tissue paper shapes in an overlapping design onto the wax paper, not quite to the edge of the paper.
4. Glue the heart frame over the mosaic. Trim the edges of the wax

 $_{\mbox{\footnotesize paper}}$. 5. Punch a hole in the top of the frame, where indicated, and attach

As you and the children work, talk about how our sins make us broken

our sins and making us into something new, whole, and beautiful.

God forgives us and loves us no matter what we have done or not

like the torn tissue-paper pieces.
Talk about the light of God's grace shining through when we confess

come. Encourage the children to take the mosaics home as a reminder to $\ensuremath{\text{Encourage}}$

eip the children thank God by hiving them to participate in one of more of the following prayer activities. Select activities appropriate

Make a chart on newsprint to assign each balloon color to one of the following phrases: I praise you, God; Tm sorry, God; help my friend, God; help me, God; thank you, God. (For example: blue = $tnan\kappa$ you, God.) Ask the children to stand in a circle. Explain the activity: While you

play "God Hears Our Prayers" or another song, they will bounce

Multiage (Ages 5–10) Sample

balloons in the air, with everyone helping keep them afloat.

When the music stops, each child will catch one balloon. Point out the chart with the color code. Explain that each child will lead a short prayer, according to his or her balloon color. For example, a child holding a blue balloon thanks God for something and the group responds, "Thank you, God,"

Give each child an inflated balloon. Play and pause the music several times, repeating the color prayers each time.

Close the prayer time by saying, "In Jesus' name, we pray," and

prompt the children to respond, "Amen."

Praying God's Grace

Teach the children a rap about prayer by saying one line at a time and encouraging them to follow along. Boldface type indicates the

We can / pray in the / morn-ing. We can / pray at / night. We can / pray when we're / close. And when we're / out of / sight.

We can / pray with / whis-pers We can / pray with a / song. We can / pray when we're / sick. We can / pray when we're / strong God is / with us all the / time.

God / hears the words we / share. God / loves every / one of us. God / lis-tens to our / prayers.

Encourage the children to create motions appropriate to the words. Ask the pastor or worship committee to let the children lead the rap in an upcoming worship service.

Offering God's Grace

Help the children make prayer prompts to offer to their families. Invite them to trace their hands on paper. Suggest that they write a few words to prompt their prayers:

- ▶ In the palm: Pray for . On the thumb: family and friends
- On the first finger: people in the world
- On the middle finger: people who lead and help
- On the ring finger: people who are sick or injured

On the little finger: my thanks and needs

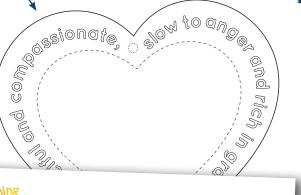
You may choose to make

a sample of your hand as

Extends the invitation to discipleship beyond the session, inspiring children to live as an expression of God's grace

Varying activity sheets suit a wide range of learning styles

Grace Notes indicate a reproducible page—copy as many as you need for your class





Cut out paper hands and glue them to construction paper. Show the children how the phrases can be used to start their own prayers. When the children have finished, ask them to take a moment to pray with their prayer hands. Encourage them to share the prayer hands with their families. Suggest they set family prayer times

LOVING AND SERVING GOD

Invite the children to gather. Ask them to think of people they will pray for in the week ahead.

explain that the group will make balloon prayers. Give everyone a piece of paper and a pencil or crayon. Ask each child to write a short prayer or draw a picture of a prayer.

Tie string to the balloons, and tape the prayers to the string. Gather in a circle. Invite each person to say the prayer on the balloon. Prompt the group to respond to each prayer with "Lord, hear our

Challenge the children to give their balloon prayers to the people they are praying for this week.

As they depart, give each child a blessing. Say to each one: "(Name), the grace of God is with you."

Colorful illustrations spark imagination One day, Jesus told a story to people who were proud of One day, jesus told a story to people who were proud of the way they lived. They trusted in themselves, in their use way usey uved. They trusted in themselves, in their own sense of being right, and looked down on everyone "A prominent religious leader and a tax collector went up to the temple to pray. The religious leader was called a else. Jesus said: o use temple to pray. The rengious leader was called a pharisee, a word that means "separate." He believed that rnarisee, a word that means separate. He believed that people pleased God best by following the Law of Moses, or he worked hard to about all the rule. people pleased God best by following the Law of Moses, so he worked hard to obey all the rules. He was a really so he worked hard to obey an the rules. Fie good person, and all the people liked him. I wonder what the Pharisees were separate from. "The other person was a tax collector. He collected money for the Romans who had invaded the country. He

Learning to Pray (Based on Luke 18:9-14)

"Oh God, he said. I thank you that I am not greedy, On God, ne said. 1 mank you mat 1 am not greedy, that I don't lie and cheat like everyone else. I am very glad, he puffed, full of himself, that I am not like the tax collector. I am a very good person, 'he admired himself, conector, 1 am a very good person, ne admired minse and I work hard to obey all the rules. I keep myself separate from all wrongdoing. I am glad to be such a

"Meanwhile, the tax collector hid in the shadows. The tax collector was very sad. He knew he hadn't always cax conector was very sad. He knew he hadn't always done the right thing. He felt sad for the ways he had hurt done the right thing. Fie reit sad for the ways ne had nur-others and turned away from God. He knew he needed others and turned away from God. He knew he needed God's love. He did what Jewish people often did when they were sorry and filled with sadness. He kept his head

bowed and began to beat his chest.

"'Oh God,' he whispered, 'I need your love. Have mercy on me. I am a sinner. Amen.' I wonder what God thought of the Pharisee's prayer

and of the tax collector's prayer. Jesus continued: "Two people left the temple. The jesus continued: 1wo people iert the temple. 1ne
pharisee had done everything right, but his prayer was not

rnansee nad done everytung right, but his prayer was niright in God's eyes. He did not understand that he still ngar in Gous eyes. He wa not understand that he still needed God's grace. The tax collector had done nothing arches have been a start for a start of the start of needed Gods grace. The tax confector had uone nounified, but he had asked for and received God's grace right, but ne had asked for and received Gods grace anyway. And the tax collector was forgiven. Now he was the rax collector and marched right up to the tront of the temple. He knew he was living a good life. He felt good about himself and stood proudly. The pharisee lifted up

hears our prayers, loves us so much.

a nears our prayers,

hears our prayers,

Lyric sheets provide words to songs found on the Music & Melodies CD

Bible stories are the foundation of the session, and are presented in ways that reveal God's grace.

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money for the Komans who had invaded the country. Fig.

I wonder why people hated the tax collector.

his arms and began to pray:

"The Pharisee and the tax collector climbed the stairs and

The marisee and the rax conector cumped the stans and went inside the temple. The Pharisee walked quickly past

went inside the temple. The rhansee wanter quitesy past the tax collector and marched right up to the front of the

Ages 3-5 Sample

RECOGNIZIN

... In Luke 18: the Bible and our F harisees were pro among the Phar sorts, a foil-he p

... In Your Ch experience unco and model a for that whether we loved can free c

.. In Your Re gratitude. Jelp the children

Learning to Pray

Help the children learn to pray with assurance in God's grace.

Guided plau sparks experiential learning and promotes children's development

GATHERING IN GOD'S GRACE You will need:

(SCM) 1-6

Select the activities for the amount of time you have. You do not need to do everything suggested n every session plant

Before the Children Arrive

the children so that their backs will be to the door. Post SCM 3-4 and glue the arrow marker on a clothespin. Use the visual schedule to provide clear expectations and a visual cue for

See SCM 5-6 for the key to the icons ® Ø ® © and ways to adapt

Welcoming and Guided Play

Greet the children by name and the words, "Grace and peace to you. Prompt the children to respond with the same words.

Introduce yourself to parents/caregivers that you do not know personally. Be sure that they know who will be caring for their

.. Explain to the parents/caregivers that the children will hear a story about prayer and learn ways to pray. Tell them that you will send them a link for the Grace Sightings resource for home use.

the guided play activities and pick one to st

 Building—Invite children to play with bl-Suggest that the children build a place in to God. Ask: Where do you pray? When? to God about?

Drawing—Provide copies of GN 1, 2, and the children to draw pictures of themselv location. As they draw, ask each child to i

is praying about and write the prayer on
Singing—Provide downloaded song an children that we can pray through sing rayers" (words are on SCM 2) for the c

Transitions can be difficult for children. Do no to join a group activity. Instead, allow them isten to a story read by an adult helper



Movement and motion-based activities support the development of motor skills in young children

Light the candle, saying, "Jesus Christ is the light of the world."

Prompt the children to say "light" with you.

Open the Bible to Luke 18 and point out that the story comes from

one is sad. Both of them pray to God.

Praying with Our Bodies

Read SCM 1. Express the story's emotions in your voice

expressions, and movements.
Conclude the story by prompting the children to say, "Ar

Play "God Hears Our Prayers," Invite the children to sir as a response to the story. Encourage them to make si

Explain that as children of God's grace, we and all peop

Adapt any activity to suit your children's needs. Ask yo

Invite the children to pray with their bodies. Repeat a

into the air; stand on your tiptoes.

sweep it across your body.)

or glad. (Make happy face.)

plate and copies of GN 4.

Color the figures on GN 4.

When we feel mad, (Make mad face.) or sad, (Make sad face.)

can I change this activity so that this child can do it?"

Thank you, God, for things that fly high, (Stretch

For things that crawl low on the ground. (Bend of

your fingers toward the ground.)
Thank you for our families! (Reach one arm out

hank you for our friends! (Reach your other are

Thank you for hearing our prayers—(Put hand

any time, in any place, and in many ways; we can pre happy, sad, or mad; we can pray with our bodies and

Explain that the story is about two of God's children. One is happy,

Preparing for Story Time Vhen you sense the children are ready to move into group time, call them to the story corner Take some time introducing the children to the idea of grace through your gracious and generous demeans Lead the children in a motion poem. (Adapted from "Teddy Bear Teddy Bear, Turn Around.")

Child of God, child of grace, turn around. (Turn around in

Child of God, child of grace, touch the ground. (Touch the Child of God, child of grace, reach up high. (Reach arms high

Child of God, child of grace, wink one eye. (Wink one eye.) Child of God, child of grace, climb the stairs. (Use arms and

Child of God, child of grace, say your prayers. (Fold hands in Child of God, child of grace, touch your nose. (Touch your

Child of God, child of grace, touch your toes. (Reach down Child of God, child of grace, turn around. (Turn around in

Child of God, child of grace, sit right down, (Sit down)



Remind the children that we can pray when we are sad, mad, or glad. Cut out the figures and glue inside the plate. and to place the praying hands in a visible place to remind the

Praying with Our Feelings

Invite the children to sing to the tune of "If You're Happy and You Know It." Brainstorm with the children to come up with additional feelings to add to the song.

If you're happy and you know it, talk to God! If you're happy and you know it, talk to God! (Make a happy face; put your hands together as if you are praying.) For God is always there, and listens to our prayers!

(Nod your head; hold your hand to your ear.) If you're happy and you know it, talk to God!

If you're angry and you know it, talk to God! . (Make a)

angry face; put your hands together as if you are praying.)

If you're sad and you know it, talk to God! ... (Make a sad face; put your hands together as if you are praying.) nvite the children to make prayer reminders. Give If you're scared and you know it, talk to God! ... (Make a scared face; put your hands together as if you are praying.) hands with the palms along the fold on the back

Snack and Closing

Have each child put away one toy or object. Invite them to sit around a table or on a clean cloth on the floor Sit down and breathe deeply several times to relax. Watch as the children imitate you.

Say: "Who has a thank-you prayer to say to God? A thank-you about

your family? About your friends? About our time together today? About the food we will eat?"

Add your own thank-you prayer, echoing what the children have

Audi your own Inams-you prays, economy what the enumen have named. Prompt everyone to say, "Amen."
Play "Jesus Lowes Me" logether (downloaded song) while you share the control of the con

As the children leave, say to each one: "(Name), God loves you very much. The grace of God is with you

Children with Disabilities and Special Needs

Growing in Grace & Gratitude supports an environment that helps children of all abilities experience God's grace.

- Children with Disabilities and Special Needs Support Glossary help leaders become familiar with the developmental terms, descriptions and provides ideas for enabling all children to participate in various activities. Icons from the glossary and notes about specific needs printed in italics are scattered throughout each session.
- The Visual Schedule helps children move through the session providing clear expectations and visual cues for the group.

By consistently and lovingly using these tools, leaders will help their faith community to discover and practice grace-filled ways to be the body of Christ with and for all children.



boundaries for appropriate movement can allow the teacher to meet the needs of the classroom while also teacher to meet the needs of the classroom want also meeting the needs of the child. Mark a place on the floor with tape, a mar, or a pillow. Be clear that the child can move within this space. Sometimes having two spots (chairs and pillows or mats) can be helpful.

Transition times provide a challenge to children. Clear expectations, follow-through, and routine help with those times, but they may not be enough for some children For children who struggle with consider quick physical activities—such as doing chair push-ups, squeezing your hands together, and hing—before or after the transition.

Sometimes children struggle with textured objects such as glue, clay, finger paint, and chalk. For some children, textures create real anxiety. Allow and encourage children to explore textures without pressure, and provide opportunities to wash or wipe hands right away. For children who struggle with texture, find a way to participate in the activity without getting their hands dirty, such as being a timekeeper.

You can adapt an activity by process, product, or You can adapt an activity by process, product, or environment—the way that something is done, what is done, or the setting in which it is done. Giving extra support in the completion of a task is an example of changing the process; having children make something different is an example of changing the product.

Instead of thinking, "This child can't do this," think, "How can I change this activity so that this child can

Children's behavior can challenge us, disrupt the class, and lead to unsafe situations. Be clear about what you eau to unsaie situations. De clear goods want y ect before you do the activity. If you don't want children to touch one another while they are in a circle tell them that before they touch one another. Clear ions let children know what the rules are in the classroom. Using the included visual schedule is a great ay to provide clear expectations and a visual cue for

Supporting Children Who Have Difficulty Communicating

teach out to parents and categories forms of communication used by children. Learning a few words in American Sign Language, becoming familiar with Picture Exchange Communication System, or exploring how to support with other system, or exporting tow to support assistive technologies are examples of showing hospitality to the children. In addition, give children time to respond and to share; for some children, listening and speaking may take longer.

Remove all food products containing allergens. Post signs to help people remember the allergy. Have all hildren wash their hands and faces to avoid triggering

be a challenge for children who struggle with attention. Supporting these children requires of help include clearly comn the activity, checking for understanding, providing visual support as well as verbal instructions, building

Leadership and Generosity

Focus on the strengths of the children, and learn to see them as gifted members of your community. Look for opportunities for them to express generosity. Offer them ways to practice leadership, such as passing out items, holding visual aids, helping other children, or serving as the example in games and activities.

ifficulty with Reading and Writing Whenever children read aloud, ask for volunteers.

Calling on a child who does not read at grade level ma make him or her feel embarrassed and unwelcomed. dways encourage children to write or draw pictures a part of their responses. Children then can share their

MS Supporting Children with Mobility Supports

As you set up, think about ample space betwee urniture to maneuver a wheelchair or walker. Think about materials and how they are positioned. Doing a roll-through in a wheelchair or walker can be a helpful way to make sure that your room setup is accessible Think about including your children who use assistiv devices. For example, seating all children on chairs or placing materials for a game on a table instead of on the floor are simple ways to create a more welcoming

Talk with parents, caregivers, and child strengths and abilities of the child as v ways to offer support. Large print or may allow full access to the material or caregivers about the use of the co

and other creations in words as they Deaf / Hard of He

To create a welcoming environment are deaf or have difficulty hearing, provide visual are deaf or have difficulty hearing, provide visual are deaf or have difficulty hearing and copies of the stories told. Employ an interpreter, and children and adults in the community to learn to municate through American Sign Language, Limit packground noise. Face a person before speaking. Become familiar with children who use assistive

echnology. Be sure to check with parents or caregiver. of children who use cochlear implants or hearing aids

To make every child feel welcomed and successful,

think about fairness in a different light. Fairness is not every child getting the same thing; it is every child

A team approach to including people with disabilities in your congregation support for the child and family, and makes including all of God's children in church school an attainable goal



Spanish Language

Growing in Grace & Gratitude is also Crecemos en gracia y gratitud!

Developed and produced in both English and Spanish languages concurrently, *Growing in Grace & Gratitude* provides opportunities for faith formation in multiple contexts—cultural and otherwise.

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Anc. Florence Vargas Miembro del Comité asesor para el trabajo con el ministerio hispano/latino IP (EE. UU.) (Ruling Elder and member of the Advisory Committee for the Offices that work with Hispanic/Latino Ministry)



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This four-session study for youth explores the questions: "What is Grace?," "Why Do I Need Grace?," "Does Grace Mean I Can DoAnything I Want To?," and "How Does God's Grace Change My Life?"

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0509 \$15.95

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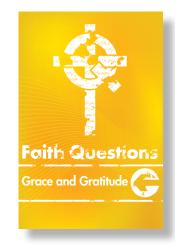
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