



The Garden

Goal: To know that God desires for us to have what we need.

RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

. . . In Genesis 3:1-13, 21, 23-24

The story of Adam and Eve eating fruit from a tree in the Garden of Eden from which God had forbidden them to eat describes the entry of sin into the world.

The story shows us the nature of sin. Sin is disobedience to God. It is seeking to do what we want, instead of what God wants us to do.

Sin is serious because it keeps us from living as God wants us to live. Sin breaks our fellowship of trust and love of our creator. This is why the couple hid when they heard God walking through the garden. God confronted them and they confessed they had disobeyed God's word. They knew they were "naked" (v. 10). So they hid in fear.

But God's grace was also at work. God "made clothes out of animal skins for the man and his wife" (v. 21). This overcame their nakedness and the shame of sin. They were sent out from the Garden. Their lives would be marked by work. But God provided for their needs and was with them. God cared for the people God created, even when they did not deserve this love. Surely they were grateful for God's grace.

. . . In Your Children's Experiences

Adam and Eve in the garden, and their life before and after the decision to eat of the tree of knowledge, can be explored on a variety of levels with your children. All ages will be able to relate to choices, making wise choices, and making foolish choices. Older children will be able to explore possible reasons why they think Adam and Eve wanted to eat from the forbidden tree. Younger children will be able to identify the ways that God continued to love and care for them, even though God did not like what they did.

. . . In Your Relationships with the Children

Children are well aware of times when, like Adam and Eve, they have wanted to hide because of something they have done that they know is wrong. So they will have no problem hearing this story and connecting with the actions and the outcomes. Inviting them to share their own stories and what happened would be a good way for them to connect with this story of disobedience. In talking about how God continued to love them even when they did something wrong, children will be helped to grow in their understanding of the wideness of God's love and grace.

Merciful God, as I examine my life in preparation for teaching the children, may I discover anew your forgiveness. Amen.



Supplies

- basic supplies
(see p. vii)
- audio recordings
(see p. vii)
- candle
- house plants
- clean rocks, stones, or
bricks
- copies of **Grace Notes**
(GN) 1
- Stories, Colors & More**
(SCM) 1, 29–30, 38–41
- Music & Melodies** (MM)
2016–2017

Responding

Claiming

- white T-shirts,
- fabric paint

Bonus Activity

- copies of GN 2 or
GN 3–4, brass fasteners

GATHERING IN GOD’S GRACE

Post **SCM 38–39**. Cut out and glue the arrow marker onto a clothespin. Use the visual schedule to provide clear expectations and a visual cue for the group.

See **SCM 40–41** 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” requires more prep.

Welcoming and Preparing



Greet each child with, “Grace be with you,” making certain you know his or her name. Introduce yourself to the children as well. Invite them to make name tags and to decorate them with drawings of something they might see in a garden.

Invite the children to use the house plants and the stones to create a garden area. Explain that this special area should be large enough for at least three people to fit in comfortably. Draw a tall tree on banner paper and hang it up in the “garden.” Place a candle and a Bible on the table. Place a bookmark at Genesis 3.

Give each child a copy of **GN 1** and a pencil. Read aloud the description listed on one of the squares. Identify one or more people in the group who fit that description. Have those people write their names or initials in the corresponding block on the papers of other group members. Invite the children to work together to find matches for as many squares as possible.

Help the children make connections and make certain everyone is introduced to someone else. Invite them to sit comfortably where they can see the garden area created earlier.

Singing

Play and sing “For the Beauty of the Earth”—**MM 2; SCM 30**. Invite the children to name parts of creation that they find beautiful.

Praying

Turn on the candle. Ask the children to tell you one activity they enjoyed during the summer. Share something that you enjoyed as well. When all have had a turn, invite the group to join together in a prayer of thanks for holidays and vacations and pleasant activities. Invoke God’s spirit to bless your time together.

Pray:

God of fruit trees and fresh, clean water,
We thank you for this wonderful earth you have made.
Help us to care for this world and for each other. 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 C L

Invite a child to retrieve the Bible from the worship table and open it to the bookmark. Ask the child to read the name of the book (Genesis). Wonder aloud what the children know about Genesis.

Introduce the story by saying that Genesis tells us about the creation of the world and of God's relationship with the earth.

Invite the children to think about a choice that they had to make over the past week. Ask them to remember why they had to make the choice, what helped them to decide, and what was the outcome of their choice. Invite volunteers to share the choices they made. Tell them that today's story is about people who made a choice.



Hearing the Story C L

Provide paper and crayons. Invite the children to draw what they hear in the story. Read **SCM 1** or ask a volunteer to read. Use your voice and expressions to make the story lively.

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

After the children have heard the Bible story, invite them to act it out. Post the drawings to use as a backdrop for the children's reenactments. Let the children volunteer for the various roles. Suggest they use the area prepared as the garden. Ask the children to recall the events of the story in order. Invite them to suggest actions for the actors. (As necessary, prompt them by asking what God did or how the man and woman acted when they heard God.)

Reflecting on God's Grace C L

Give each person a paper plate and invite the children to make emoticon faces. Suggest they draw an emoticon on each side of the paper plate. Have them draw a different expression on each emoticon.

Read the first portion of the story from **SCM 1** and ask the children to use their emoticons to show how they imagine the man and the woman felt when they were first in the garden. Ask how God felt at the first of the story. Then ask the children to tell what happened next in the story, always asking them to show the feelings they associate with the different events.

If not mentioned, emphasize the grace in the story, when God clothes Adam and Eve. Is that a happy face?

Reassure the children that God continues to love and care for us, even when we break the rules. When we confess our sins, God promises to forgive us and give us another chance.

Singing

Sing "Wherever I May Wander"—**MM 1; SCM 29**. Turn off the candle.



RESPONDING IN GRATITUDE

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



Claiming God's Grace

Before the session, contact children and ask them to bring white T-shirts, or ask several adults of the congregation to donate a shirt.

Remind the children that a helpful way to think about God's grace is that it is a love that is greater than any love we can imagine. God showed grace to Adam and Eve by clothing them when they were naked and afraid.

Invite the children to make shirts that represent God's grace. Use fabric paint to decorate white T-shirts. Print words and phrases, symbols and images that communicate God's grace.

As the paint dries, discuss:

- ▼ I wonder, "How can we explain these words and images to people who ask about them?"

Celebrating God's Grace

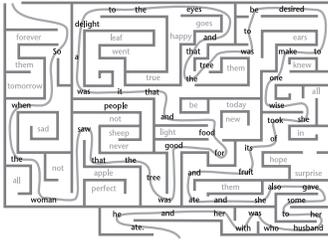


Give the children play dough and invite them to begin working with the dough to make figures of human beings. While they work, suggest that they think of the world as a garden. Then ask the children if they know what God wants them to do in the garden called earth. Write their responses on newsprint. (If necessary, suggest that God wants us to love one another, to care for the earth, to care for people, and so on.) As the children talk about what they can or cannot do, suggest that they work together in pairs and use the figures to act out some of the things God wants them to do.

Work with the children to help them discover specific ways they can be caretakers. Make plans to implement some of their ideas.

Praying God's Grace

Explain that there are many ways to write a prayer. We can use words, sing a prayer, and even draw a prayer. Hand out paper and drawing materials. Invite children to draw a short prayer giving thanks to God for our beautiful world using pictures instead of words. For instance, if a child wants to create a prayer thanking God for sunshine, puppies, and bananas, they can draw a picture of those three items. If desired, they might also draw a picture of what they imagine God to be like (a star, bright light, person, and so on).



Bonus Activity



Option 1:

Hand out Bibles and copies of **GN 2**. Invite children to read Genesis 3:6, then complete the “Tree of Knowledge Maze.” Afterward discuss what they might have done had they been Eve or Adam. What did Eve and Adam gain when they ate from the fruit of the tree of knowledge? What did they lose?

Option 2:

Hand out copies of **GN 3** and **4**. Ask the children to color the pictures on **GN 3**. As they work, talk together about what life was like inside and outside of the garden in today’s story. Ask them to name some things they like to do out-of-doors. Invite them to draw pictures showing these activities in the space provided on the circle in **GN 4**. Ask them to cut out the circles as directed and use a brass fastener to connect them together. Encourage them to retell today’s Bible story.

LOVING AND SERVING GOD



Invite the children to gather and lead them in cleaning up the worship space.

Sing “Wherever I May Wander”—**MM 1; SCM 29**—together.

Explain that you are going to say a prayer together. You will say a line and they will repeat it.

- God called Adam and Eve’s names. /
- God calls my name, too. /
- Adam and Eve listened to God. /
- I listen to God. /
- God cared for Adam and Eve. /
- God cares for us, too. /

As you send them, say to each one:

(*Name*), you are a child of God. Listen for God’s call to you in the coming week.

Encourage the children to send one another out by calling each other by name.

Ask parents and caregivers for their e-mail addresses so you can send the Grace Sightings link, or invite them to visit gracesightings.org.

<p>Likes to sing.</p>	<p>Born in 2008.</p>	<p>Likes to play baseball.</p>
<p>Likes to read.</p>	<p>Is a new member of the group.</p>	<p>Has buttons on their shirt.</p>
<p>Has a brother or sister.</p>	<p>Is wearing socks.</p>	<p>Has brown hair.</p>

Tree of Knowledge Maze

start

forever
So
them
tomorrow
when
sad
the
all
woman

delight
to
the
leaf
went
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it
that
people
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sheep
never
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apple
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gave
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God's Garden Circle (part 1)



God's Garden Circle (part 2)

