



# God Calls a Shepherd Boy

Goal: To celebrate that God knows us inside and out.

## RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

### . . . In 1 Samuel 16:1-13

Samuel's role as God's prophet led to his finding a shepherd boy, David, to be anointed and become Israel's greatest king.

When God rejected Saul, Israel's first king, God instructed Samuel to visit Jesse of Bethlehem, for "I've chosen one of his sons to be my king" (16:1). Initially, Samuel thought the tall and handsome son of Jesse, Eliab, would be God's choice. But God said, "No." For "people judge others by what they look like, but I judge people by what is in their hearts" (16:7). Eventually, Jesse's seven sons appeared before Samuel, but none were God's choice. When Samuel inquired if Jesse had another son, he was told the youngest son, David, was out taking care of the sheep.

As soon as David appeared, the LORD told Samuel, "He's the one! Get up and pour the olive oil on his head" (v. 12). David was to become king and "the Spirit of the LORD took control of David and stayed with him from then on" (v. 13).

God guided Samuel to the person God wanted to be king. David was not the most obvious choice. But he was God's choice. God's grace guided; and the nation would be grateful.

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

Making choices, being chosen—these are experiences that children have. Wise school teachers make sure each child has a chance to be a leader. The story of God's choosing David to be the leader of God's people provides a great way to think about the ways that God wants us all to live with each other. Children quickly learn about difference and evaluating people by how they dress, or speak, or how they look. A reminder that what matters are the things that can't be seen; what is inside our hearts is what's important for children of all ages to remember.

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

Inviting children to tell stories about a time when they have been a leader and what they did is a great way into this story of David. Naming characteristics of leaders would be a good activity for older children who are able to name people they know in their church, community, and country. Children quickly pick up on what the culture values in a leader. The story of David invites them to consider a very important quality in a leader. The thing that God wants is a faithful heart, a person who is wise, caring, and loves others. As you send them on their way at the end of the session, invite them to add their response to this sentence: "You are a leader when . . ." As they leave, bless them with the sign of the cross on their forehead or on their hand, anointing them for their work as one of God's leaders.

*Holy God, open my eyes to the gifts you have given each child in my group. Remind me that you have given me gifts, too. Amen.*



## Supplies

basic supplies  
(see p. vii)

audio recordings  
(see p. vii)

vegetable oil

flowers

mild spices

orange/lemon rinds

eucalyptus

small mixing bowls

paper towels

tiny plastic or glass  
containers

rock 1 cut from **SCM 20**

**Stories, Colors & More**  
(**SCM**) **5, 20–21, 32–34,**  
**38–41**

**Music & Melodies (MM)**  
**2017–2018**

## Responding

### Celebrating

ink pad(s), hand wipes

### Offering

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

### Bonus Activity

copies of **GN 2**

## GATHERING IN GOD'S GRACE

Post 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.

“Celebrating God’s Grace” requires more prep.

### Welcoming and Preparing

**LG A B M MS FA**

Greet each child with, “Grace and peace be with you, (*name*).” Prompt children to respond, “And also with you.”

Invite children to help set the scene and prepare the worship space. On a table, place rock 1 cut from **SCM 20**. Also add **SCM 21**.

Bookmark 1 Samuel 16 and place the Bible on the table.

Invite some children to cut hearts from construction paper and to use crayons to write on them feelings, whether positive or negative (*joy, love, envy, anger, etc.*). Add the hearts to the worship table.

Ask some children to help prepare today’s Responding in Gratitude activities. Suggest that one or two prepare to lead today’s singing.

Encourage conversation as the group works.

Invite children to make their own samples of anointing oil using the materials provided. Be sensitive to allergies.

In biblical times, such oil was likely olive oil blended with fragrant perfumes. Use olive oil or another light vegetable oil such as canola or sunflower oil. Avoid peanut oil in case of allergies. Have a variety of fragrant items on hand (for example, flower petals, spices, orange and lemon rinds, eucalyptus). Small containers with lids allow children to take their oils home. Save the oils to be used later in the session.

### Singing

Invite the group to sit at the table. Admire the efforts of the children to create the worship space. Sing “A Shoot Will Rise”—**MM 6**. Follow the lyrics on **SCM 33**.

### Praying

Turn on the candle. Ask the children to share in one word what their heart feels right now. If they need help, offer that they could be feeling excited, curious, bored, eager, etc. Go around the circle so that each child has the chance to offer one word. Pray:

God, you know the feelings of our hearts.  
Thank you for your constant love. Amen.

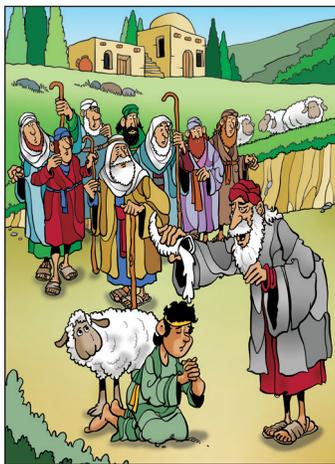


### Preparing to Hear the Story

C L

Return attention to the items on the worship table. Invite children to listen for the ways each fits into the story they will hear. Hold rock 1 in your hand and offer that over the next few weeks you will share in the story of David. Each week a new rock will appear with a symbol to help them to recall the story.

Invite children to share stories about a time when they have been a leader and what they did. Wonder together what qualities God thinks make a good leader.



### Hearing the Story

M MS

Invite a child to find 1 Samuel 16 in the Bible.

Read **SCM 5** or ask a volunteer to read. Use your voice, expressions, and feelings to make the story lively.

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

Play “mime scene.” As you read one piece of the story, the children work as a group (or two if you have a large group) to depict it without talking. Once they have determined their group action, making sure everyone is included, invite them to share it with you.

Use these sentences for them to depict:

- ▼ When Samuel arrived in Bethlehem, the people came to worship.
- ▼ Jesse’s oldest son, Eliab, was tall and strong. But he was not to be king.
- ▼ One by one Jesse’s sons stood before Samuel.
- ▼ David was tending the sheep.
- ▼ Samuel knew David was the one God had chosen.
- ▼ David knelt. Samuel poured oil on his head, setting him apart for God’s work.

### Reflecting on God’s Grace

Thank them for their creative ways of using their bodies to tell the story. Wonder together what it was about David that made God choose him as king.

Reread the paragraph beginning, “But God disagreed.” Wonder aloud what the differences are in looking at what is on the “outside” of a person and what is on the “inside” of a person. Which do you think is more important and why?

### Singing

Give God an offering of music. Play and sing together “Listen to the Word That God Has Spoken”—**MM 23; SCM 34**. Turn off the candle.



## RESPONDING IN GRATITUDE

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



### Celebrating God's Grace



Provide each child with unlined paper; invite them to write the words, "God Knows Me Inside and Out" at the top of the page.

- ▼ Dip their thumbs in the ink pads and put one thumbprint on their page, then draw a heart around their thumbprint.
- ▼ Invite children to add their thumbprint to every other child's sheet.
- ▼ Ask them to find a partner and to compare their thumbprints, noting the different patterns.

Ask pairs to imagine what God might see when God looks at each of them. Just as God knew David was the right one to be king, invite them to imagine what God may see in each of them. Ask them to draw hearts around their partners thumbprint as a reminder that God loves and sees all that is unique about them.

Conclude by inviting children to give a "high-five" to (or bump elbows with) each child in the class as they say the words, "God knows you inside and out!"

### Praying God's Grace

Gather children in a circle; lead them in this body prayer, inviting them to repeat both words and motions:

Thank you, God (*praying hands starting at center of chest and lifted above head*)

For knowing the real me. (*swirl right hand above head and then over heart*)

And help me (*praying hands lifted above head and lowered to center of chest*)

To see others as you do. (*look to person on right and left*)

Make my heart joyful (*waving both hands in air*)

Loving (*arms crossed over chest*)

Compassionate (*hands placed over heart and then held out*)

And Faithful. (*palms up, raising arms above head*)

Forgive my anger (*mad face*)

Rudeness (*arms crossed angrily*)

And jealousy. (*pulling an imaginary rope towards you*)

You are good and I am grateful. Amen. (*make a circle shape extending arms above head and down to waist*)



If your group prepared an offering activity in the previous session, allow time to check in on progress and carryout the plan.

### Offering God's Grace LD

Encourage children to think of their friends and family members, naming the kind things they do. Invite them to see their friends and relatives as God does. For example, mom is quiet but is always helping others; or people see their friend as only a good ball player, but he is also kind to kids with few friends.

Offer copies of **GN 1** and pencils, and ask children to choose one of the people they named. Ask the children to write or draw the kind things they do around the figure. Inside the figure, invite the children to write a note to that person telling the person they chose what their kindness means to them. Ask them to sign the letter with the encouragement that God knows them inside and out. Let each child deliver the letter to the person they named. Offer a prayer for the people the children recognized, thanking God for knowing each of us inside and out, and asking for the grace to see others that way too.

### Bonus Activity LG

Invite children to imagine they are David. They want to be the very best shepherd in all the hills of Israel. Allow the children to form pairs or small groups. Hand out one copy of **GN 2** for each pair and ask them to create a list of rules for good shepherds on the left half of the page. Allow time to share the ideas. Write "Rules for Wise Shepherds" on newsprint. Combine everyone's ideas on this list.

Ask the children to make a second list of rules for good kings on the right side of the page. Write "Rules for Wise Kings" on the newsprint. Then come together to share the rules.

Compare the two lists. What are the similarities? Which list of rules does the group want to adopt? Work together to compile the list of rules and post the final list in your meeting space until advent begins.

## LOVING AND SERVING GOD LG TD

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

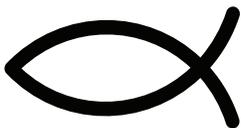
Sing "You Call Us, God"—**MM 4; SCM 32**. Invite the children to add motions that represent "calling," such as cupping their hands around their mouths or mimicing a phone call.

Wonder together what qualities would have made David a faithful king and good leader; what qualities God wants to see in each of us.

Ask each child to finish this sentence: "I am faithful when . . ."

As they leave, using the oil, bless them with the sign of the cross or the **ICHTHUS** (fish) on their foreheads or hands, marking them to work as one of God's faithful leaders.

As you anoint each one with oil, say, "(Name), go in God's grace to serve the Lord."



Ask parents and caregivers for their e-mail addresses so you can send the Grace Sightings link, or invite them to visit [gracesightings.org](http://gracesightings.org).



