



Abigail Makes Peace

Goal: To explore ways that showing hospitality to others can help bring peace.

RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

. . . In 1 Samuel 25

The story of Nabal, Abigail, and David shows a resourceful woman who made peace and prevented violence between powerful men.

Nabal was “a very rich man” in Maon who was also “rough and mean” (vv. 2–3). David was the leader of a group of men who protected persons around the borders of Judah. When David’s men asked Nabal to share his food with them, Nabal refused and insulted David. This incited David, who set out to do violence to Nabal.

Abigail, Nabal’s wife, was told of the impending doom. She put much food and drink together and met David. Abigail said, “Don’t pay any attention to that good-for-nothing Nabal. His name means ‘fool,’ and it really fits him! I didn’t see the men you sent, but please take this gift of food that I’ve brought and share it with your followers” (vv. 23–27).

This gift was important in extending good will. David recognized Abigail had averted many deaths. He told her, “Your good sense kept me from taking revenge and killing innocent people” (v. 33). After Nabal died, David and Abigail were married.

Abigail was a peacemaker and extended grace. This showed David that vengeance was not right; and he expressed gratitude.

. . . In Your Children’s Experiences

David’s meeting Abigail and Nabal will not be as familiar to the children as the stories you have been sharing previously. With this story, children will be able to hear about a wise and resourceful woman, which is so important for girls and boys. It tells about a wise peacemaker who made a wise decision about how to help someone and avert violence. David praises her good sense in the actions she took to help his men. Children can identify a variety of ways that Abigail could have responded and realize that we face choices all the time in our interactions with others.

. . . In Your Relationships with the Children

This story is rich in action and will be one with which children of all ages will be able to engage. Identifying the characters, the setting, and the plot of the story will be a great way for them to see how the character of David evolves, and how his mind changes as a result of his interaction with Abigail. One of the things they can learn from this story is that we can be determined to take action against someone, but our minds can change when a friend helps us see another way that might work.

God of peace, help me and the children to hear about ways to make peace. Help us be peacemakers, too. Amen.



Supplies

- basic supplies
(see p. vii)
- audio recordings
(see p. vii)
- rock photos 1, 2, 3, and 4
cut from **SCM 20**
- sticky notes
- figs
- raisins
- grapes
- flat bread
- juice

Grace Notes (GN) 1

Stories, Colors & More (SCM) 8, 20, 32, 37–41

Music & Melodies (MM) 2017–2018

Responding

Celebrating

- food on the worship table

Praying

- current newspapers, magazines, copies of **GN 2**

Bonus Activity

- copies of **GN 3**

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.

Option: “Hearing the Story” suggests inviting a female guest to portray Abigail and read the script on **GN 1**.

“Celebrating God’s Grace” and “Praying God’s Grace” require more prep.

Welcoming and Preparing

LG A B M MS FA

Greet the children by name and with the words, “The grace of Christ be with you.” Prompt the children to respond with the same words.

Invite children to help prepare the worship space. Offer: a candle, Bible, and rocks 1, 2, 3, and 4 cut from **SCM 20**.

Let children arrange the figs, raisins, grapes, flat bread, juice, napkins, and paper cups on the table. As they do, wonder aloud about hospitality, what it is, and how people show hospitality. Comment that in Bible times, people lived by a code of hospitality. They knew that offering someone shelter was often a matter of life and death in the harsh conditions of the wilderness. They believed it was wrong to refuse a request for food or shelter even from an enemy. Mention that the children will share the food later in the session.

Ask two or three children to make three posters with sketches of donkeys.

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

Singing

Gather the group together in the worship space. Play “You Call Us, God”—**MM 4**; **SCM 32**—and sing along.

Praying

Turn on the candle. Invite children to close their eyes and breathe deeply. Encourage them to imagine God as someone who welcomes them with open arms, and who makes them feel at peace.

Offer a prayer:

God, thank you for caring about us, for always being there and for loving us. Help us to love and care for others the same way that you love us. Amen.



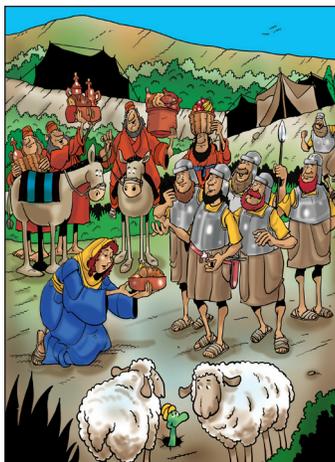
Preparing to Hear the Story C L

Divide the group into three smaller groups. Collect the rocks from the worship table. Give each group one of the rocks from the previous three sessions. Invite each group to create a pantomime telling the part of David's story depicted on their rock.

Explain that the story they are about to hear takes place after David defeated Goliath, but before he became king of Israel. Tell the children the following:

David had once been like a son to King Saul, but the king's feelings had changed. He chased David all over the country, wanting to harm him. David was forced to live in caves and even lived outside the country for a while. During this time, men who thought that David would be a good king joined with him. They protected the people and villages in the area. As the Bible story begins, David has been protecting the shepherds and flocks of a man named Nabal.

Hold up today's rock with the peace sign and offer that today's symbol points to the wise actions of a brave woman to bring peace.



Hearing the Story L

Have a child open the Bible to 1 Samuel 25 and place the open Bible on the worship table.

Read **SCM 8**. Use your voice, expressions, tone of voice, and feelings to make the story as engaging as you can.

Option: Invite a female guest to tell the story from the perspective of Abigail, using the script on **GN 1**. After "Abigail" tells her story, invite the children to ask her questions.

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

Reflecting on God's Grace LG

Read aloud 1 Samuel 25:18 and explain that people in Bible times ate food that was different from what we eat. Invite the children to name some of the things Abigail brought to David. Ask the children to write or draw the gifts on sticky notes, then stick them onto the donkeys. If time allows, children can do more than one set of gifts. As the children work, ask them to think about what kinds of food they would take to someone in need today. Help them name such sharing as hospitality.

Singing

Give God an offering of music. Play and sing together "Shalom Havarim"—**MM 31; SCM 37**. Turn off the candle.



RESPONDING IN GRATITUDE

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



Be aware that there may be children in your group for whom hunger could be an everyday occurrence. Adapt the questions if needed and keep an attentive heart to situations where there may be need.

Celebrating God's Grace



Ask the group to imagine that they live in the wilderness, like Abigail and David. Invite them to build a tent with materials found in the room to protect them from the sun. Ask others to gather the food items that are on the worship table.

Add a sense of adventure and effort by hiding other food items around the room to give them the opportunity to search for them.

While they are doing this, encourage them to talk about what it would have been like to live in the desert country and herd sheep for a living. Once they build the tent and gather the food, invite the children to sit. Enjoy the snacks and talk about being able to eat only what you produced or found, living in tents, and moving from place to place. Discuss what it feels like to eat when you are hungry. Ask: Have you ever been very hungry? played too long? experienced supper being delayed? What is it like to sit down and eat a hot meal after playing outside on a winter's day?



Option:
Go to YouTube and listen to a version of the song "Make Me a Channel of Your Peace." Compare the song with the poem, and wonder together how songs are like prayers.

Praying God's Grace

Ask the children to look through magazines and newspapers or think about news stories they may have heard. Do they know of any people who are "Abigails" and are working for peace? Spend some time identifying places where "Abigails" are needed—places around the world where peace is needed.

Distribute copies of **GN 2**. Explain that the prayer is from some time ago and no one knows for sure who wrote it or when it was written. Explain that many people attribute the prayer to St. Francis of Assisi, while others think it was written sometime during World War II. Read the prayer together and see if there are any words that the children do not understand. Talk about the word "sow" and stress that when we sow seeds in the ground, they grow and spread and change the landscape.

Encourage the children to color the words and items in the circle. If time is available, they can add more peace reminders around the border.

Read the prayer aloud together. Then, review the list of places where peace is needed. Ask volunteers to read the names of places one at a time and lead the group in the prayer, "Help them make peace," after each.



Offering God's Grace

Invite children to close their eyes and create a blank movie screen in their minds. Tell the children that you will ask them to create pictures on the movie screen in their minds to help them think about peacemaking. Describe the following:

- Some of your friends are playing soccer when a group of older children arrives at the field. The older children want to play, but not with your friends. How can you resolve this problem peacefully?

Suggest that children think of ways of resolving the problem so that no one loses. They may need to try out in their minds several ways of being peacemakers.

After a short time, ask children to clear the screen in their minds and slowly open their eyes. Give them an opportunity to tell about their resolution to the problem. Do not force children to reveal their thoughts.

Option: Encourage the children to take a few minutes to turn the scene into a short play.

Wonder aloud how Abigail might have tried to resolve the problem. Challenge the children to look for opportunities to be peacemakers in the coming week.

Bonus Activity

LD

Distribute copies of **GN 3**. Hand out Bibles and let the children work in groups to fill in the blanks before doing the word search.

Answers: 1. Nabal; 2. surly, mean; 3. sword; 4. Abigail; 5. loaves, wine, sheep, grain, raisins, figs; 6. sense; 7. feast.



LOVING AND SERVING GOD

LG

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

Read each line below while showing the children the hand motion that goes with it. Then repeat the line with them doing the action.

David was coming and wanted Nabal to share his feast. (*hold hands open, separated, palms up*)

Nabal frowned and made a fist. (*make a fist*)

Nabal shook his fist and said, "I won't share with David!" (*shake fist*)

His wise wife, Abigail, said, "We will share our food." (*hold both hands together, open, palms up*)

Abigail made peace all by herself. One person can make a difference. (*point index finger up*)

I can make peace. (*point to self*)

You can make peace. (*point to others*)

Send the children with a blessing:

Go in peace to make peace wherever you can.

The grace of God goes with you.

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

Hello! I am Abigail. My husband is a very rich man named Nabal. But wealth does not make someone wise! I'm going to tell you what happened between my husband and David.

Do you remember David? The prophet Samuel told him that he was going to be king of Israel someday. King Saul was very jealous of David, so David had to hide out in the countryside.

One day, my husband was having his servants cut wool from our sheep. David sent messengers to Nabal, reminding Nabal that David and his men had helped to protect our sheep. The messengers asked for help with food and supplies.

And what did my foolish husband do? He pretended that he had never heard of David. "What makes you think I would take my bread, my water, and my meat, and give it to you? Besides, David may not have even sent you!"

When the messengers told David how Nabal had acted, David was very angry! He and four hundred of his men set out to fight the people of my town. But one of Nabal's servants told me the whole story. "David's men were often nearby when we were caring for the sheep. They never hurt us or stole from us, and we were always safe," he said. "Can't we do something now about how Nabal treated David?"

I knew I had to do something! I told my servants to load donkeys with bread, wine, meat, grain, raisins, and figs for me to take to David. Suddenly, as I was riding my donkey on the path, there was David!

Quickly, I got off my donkey and bowed to David. "Don't pay any attention to that good-for-nothing Nabal!" I said. "His name means fool, and it really fits him! Please take this gift of food I've brought and share it with your men. The Lord has kept you from killing innocent people to get back at Nabal. The Lord will always protect you and promises good things for you."

David said, "God must have sent you to meet me! Praise God, and you should also be praised for your good sense. You kept me from getting back at Nabal. Don't worry—I'll do what you asked."



A Prayer for Peace

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.

Where there is hatred, let me sow love;

where there is injury, pardon;

where there is doubt, faith;

where there is despair, hope;

where there is darkness, light;

where there is sadness, joy.



Abigail Word Search

1. Who was the man from Maon? (1 Samuel 25:3) _____.
2. Nabal was _____ and _____. (1 Samuel 25:3)
3. David said, "Every man strap on his _____." (1 Samuel 25:13)
4. One of the men told _____. (1 Samuel 25:14)
5. Abigail packed up _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, and _____ for David's men. (1 Samuel 25:18)
6. David said to Abigail, "Blessed be your good _____." (1 Samuel 25:33)
7. Instead of sharing, Nabal used his food to have a _____.
(1 Samuel 25:36)

K	H	E	P	C	A	S	A	G	E	B	L	B
K	F	G	D	L	B	U	M	X	T	A	C	P
N	V	X	Z	O	Z	R	E	S	W	O	R	D
A	B	I	G	A	I	L	A	P	C	D	X	I
B	F	Z	H	V	S	E	N	S	E	P	T	S
A	L	M	G	E	F	Y	O	K	L	E	A	L
L	O	S	J	S	K	S	Q	R	N	T	V	X
X	D	C	G	A	G	R	A	I	N	C	R	W
Z	E	I	E	I	K	A	W	M	I	M	I	Q
H	F	J	G	P	F	I	A	L	D	N	N	X
K	D	L	O	K	E	S	D	N	E	T	S	Q
P	I	B	H	U	G	I	C	P	R	V	X	Y
F	N	C	Q	J	M	N	B	W	A	F	Q	C
S	U	R	L	Y	F	S	H	E	E	P	H	Q

