



What Shall I Give?

Goal: To recognize what God desires from us.

RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

. . . In Micah 6:6-8

Micah was a prophet from a small village in the southern kingdom of Judah during the time of kings Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. It was a time of increasing uncertainty and threat from the growing Assyrian empire, which took over the northern kingdom of Israel more than 700 years before Jesus was born. The purpose of a prophet in Micah's time was to remind the people of their covenant with God and God's faithfulness to them, and to make them aware of their present unfaithfulness and how they had strayed from the covenant.

Micah predicted disaster for the capitals of Israel and Judah because of the people's failure to keep their covenant with God. Micah condemned their worship of idols and their oppression of the poor. In Micah 6:1-8, God's words against Israel are described in several ways depending on the translation—as a “complaint” or an “accusation,” a “case” or a “controversy.” In a sense, the passage is set up as a trial at which Israel is being accused, and the mountains and hills are called to be witnesses. Verse 8 of this passage is often thought of as a summary of the message of the prophets, and many regard it as a basic instruction on living faithfully with God and others.

. . . In Your Children's Experiences

Children may be familiar with the idea that someone may speak on God's behalf; however, they may restrict this ability to people such as ministers or other religious authorities. They may be less familiar with the idea that God may choose to speak to and through them—that all of us may be called to be prophets. Affirm that God can speak to anyone, not only to a select few. Most children have an intense sense of justice, of what is and is not fair, particularly on a personal level. They may be less familiar with injustice on a national or global scale.

. . . In Your Relationships with the Children

The concept of walking (humbly) with God in covenant is probably most easily understood in terms of relationship. Affirm that relationship to God is possible, even though God is unseen. Share ways that you communicate with God, such as through prayer, Scripture, prophets, and other people and circumstances. Resist the temptation to turn Micah 6:8 into a set of rules, which one can use to justify one's actions or compare one's righteousness with that of others.

*Gracious God, may my life be a reflection of what you want from us:
to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with you. Amen.*



Supplies

Music & Melodies
(MM) 2022–2023

Stories, Colors & More
(SCM) i–iv, 12, 12a, 12b,
12c, 20, 24

basic supplies
(see p. vii)

e-book or story audio
(see p. vii)

candle

green cloth

Responding

Celebrating

two copies of
Grace Notes (GN) 1;
36 balloons (18 of one
color and 18 of another
color); **SCM 12a, 12b, 12c**

Extra

copies of **GN 2**

GATHERING IN GOD’S GRACE

Post **SCM i–ii**, “Your Visual 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

LG C

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

Invite children to prepare the worship space with a Bible, a candle, and a green cloth. Provide drawing paper and markers, and invite children to draw pictures of cows, sheep, birds, grains, oil, and fruit, each on different pieces of paper. Have them add their pictures 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. Invite a volunteer to practice reading today’s Scripture passage.

As children prepare the space, wonder together about what they imagine God requires of or wants from them. Simply let them talk; don’t worry about correcting or adding to their ideas.

Singing

MS

Play, listen to, clap, and dance to “Make a Joyful Noise”—**MM 16**; **SCM 20**.

Praying

MS T

Turn on the candle as a reminder of God’s light in the world through Jesus. Gather in a circle, inviting children to stand. Lead them in this body prayer, inviting them to repeat your words and motions.

God of grace, (*raise hands to the sky*) /
Lead us to be people (*move right hand, palm up, from the
center to the side*) /
who do justice, (*palms up, right and left hands bouncing up
and down as though a scale, coming to rest level with one
another*) /
love kindness, (*place hands over heart*) /
and walk humbly with you. (*walk in place*) /
Amen. /



Preparing to Hear the Story C

Invite discussion about the role of a prophet, asking children to share ideas they have about what prophets do. If they need guidance, offer that a prophet shares a message from God with the people. Wonder if prophets have an easy or a hard time sharing God's message with others. Consider what could be easy and what could be hard about their job. Wonder together how people may sometimes respond to prophets.

Hearing the Story VI LG L MS

Invite a child to find Micah 6 in the Bible. Invite a volunteer to read Micah 6:6-8. Conclude the reading by saying, "Word of wisdom, Word of grace," and prompt children to say, "Thanks be to God." Place the open Bible on the worship table.

Hand out **SCM 12a**, **12b**, and **12c** to three volunteers. When they hear it mentioned in the story, invite them to hold up the appropriate sign. Review the actions from the prayer and invite children not holding posters to do these motions when you read each of the three things the Lord requires.

- ▼ Do justice. (*palms up, right and left hands bouncing up and down as though a scale, coming to rest level with one another*)
- ▼ Love kindness. (*place hands over heart*)
- ▼ And walk humbly with God. (*walk in place*)

Using **SCM 12**, read a retelling of the story. Pause when appropriate to give children a moment to hold their signs up and do the motions.

Reflecting on God's Grace C

Look at your worship table and ask what is wrong with it. Suggest that it shows what the people first thought was important to give to God. Ask the children what they could replace those pictures with. Suggest that they use the three SCM pictures.

Use these questions to guide discussion:

- ▼ What does it mean to "do justice"? What are ways we see justice being done, and what are injustices we see in the world?
- ▼ What are ways we "love kindness"? How do we as people of faith model that? How have we seen others model loving kindness?
- ▼ How do we "walk humbly with God," or spend time with God?
- ▼ Why do you think these three things are more important to God than the "stuff" people want to offer?

- T** Use transition cues to give plenty of warning that a change is coming. Clear, tangible signals help alleviate tensions. Consider using count-down numbers on a whiteboard before moving to the next activity.



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.



Singing



Play and sing “We Are Growing”—**MM 28; SCM 24**. Take time to learn the words to this new song. Turn off the candle.

RESPONDING IN GRATITUDE

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

Claiming God’s Grace



Provide each child with a large sheet of construction paper and whatever medium (paint or markers) you choose for this project. Invite them to recall the motions they used for the three things the Lord requires during “Praying” and “Hearing the Story.” Suggest that using the body motions is a helpful way to remember the three things God wants from us. Tell them they will create a piece of artwork as a visual reminder as well.

Invite children to trace and paint or color their handprint, draw a heart, and trace and paint or color their footprint on the poster. Write the following phrases on a sheet of newsprint so that the children can copy them: “Do justice,” “Love kindness,” and “Walk humbly with God.” Tell them to use markers to write “Do justice.” next to their hand drawing; “Love kindness.” next to the heart; and “Walk humbly with God.” next to the foot. As they work, discuss ways they see the church living each of these things and helping others to live them as well.

SD *Sensory issues may affect one sense, like hearing, touch, or taste, or may affect a number of senses. For some children, common sounds may be painful or overwhelming. Help these children feel more comfortable by providing advance warning. Putting them in charge of the challenging situations, such as handing out balloons, allows them time to process the stimuli. Avoiding sensations like loud noises may be the best course of action for some children.*



Celebrating God’s Grace



*Before the session, use the blank spaces on **GN 1** to add a “justice,” “kindness,” and “walk humbly with God” activity that may be particular to your church. Make two copies of **GN 1** and cut apart the strips. Roll up each strip from one copy and place them in one color of balloons. Do the same with the other sheet and the other color of balloons. Blow up and tie off the balloons. Place one color of balloons in one garbage bag and the other color of balloons in another garbage bag.*

Lay **SCM 12a, 12b, and 12c** on the floor at one end of your room. Form two teams and line them up at the other side of the room. Place



one color of balloons by one team and the other color of balloons by the other team. Use the following directions to play the game:

- ▼ Have the first person in line take a balloon. They run to the signs and stomp or sit on their balloon to pop it.
- ▼ They find the strip, read it (*provide assistance as needed*), and place it on the poster they think the action describes—is it a way to do justice, love kindness, or walk humbly with God? If they are unsure, tell them to place it where they think is most appropriate.
- ▼ They run back to their team and high five the next child, who then repeats the action.

Once all balloons have been popped, take time to review where each action is placed. If a slip fits better under another heading, let children discuss why and move it. Lead them in understanding what it means to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God.

Praying God's Grace

B MS L

Invite children to join you in “walking humbly” as you walk and pray. Encourage them to keep their hands to themselves and to refrain from talking to others as they pray silently. Lead them around the church, not entering spaces if it will be disruptive, but standing outside of them. Guide them using the following prompts:

- ▼ Start in your space—pray for one another.
- ▼ Visit the kitchen—pray for those in your community and around the world who are hungry or don't get enough to eat.
- ▼ Visit the nursery—pray for women in other countries who don't have access to good medical care while they are pregnant.
- ▼ Visit the youth room—pray for teenagers who feel lonely.
- ▼ Visit the parking lot—pray for people who may live in their cars, without a structure to call home.
- ▼ Visit the front doors of your church—pray for people who don't feel welcome anywhere.
- ▼ End back in your space, asking God to lead you to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God.

Extra Activity

LD

Ask the children, “What does God ask of us?” Hand out copies of GN 2 and pencils, and allow time for children to follow those words through the maze. Prompt the children to write the words on the lines below when they finish the maze. If time allows, suggest that they decorate the border with images of ways to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God.



LOVING AND SERVING GOD



Lead children in cleaning up the worship space.

End with the following litany. Distribute **SCM 12a**, **12b**, and **12c** again and ask children to hold up their posters when you point to them. Invite a volunteer to lead the litany with the question, “What does the Lord require of you?”

Leader: “What does the Lord require of you?”

SCM 12a is held up while children read it aloud.

Leader: “What does the Lord require of you?”

SCM 12b is held up while children read it aloud.

Leader: “What does the Lord require of you?”

SCM 12c is held up while children read it aloud.

Bless each child, saying, “(Name), go in grace and seek to follow what the Lord requires of you.”

Invite children to join you next week.



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).

Help out at a local food pantry

Invite a new student to sit at your lunch table

Stand up against racism

Spend time in worship

Spend time in prayer

Read Scripture to learn God's ways

Pray for others

Don't take more than you need

Treat all people equally

Share what you can with others

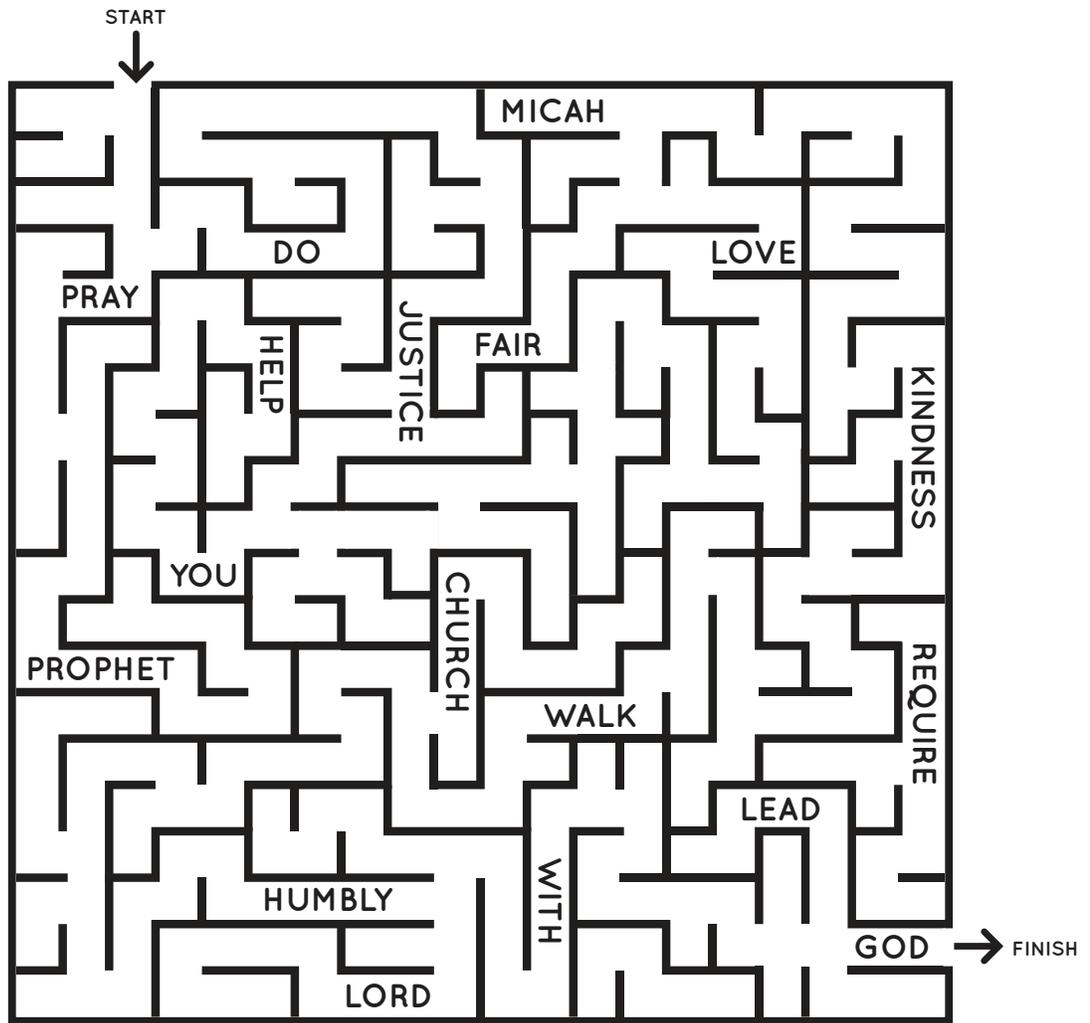
Write a letter to your congressperson about
an issue that is important to you

Help make a meal for someone who has been ill

Give your time to serve at church

Clean up litter around your town

Donate toys you no longer use to a local shelter



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