



Share Everything

Goal: To celebrate being a follower of Jesus.

RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

. . . In Acts 2:37-47

The dramatic event of Pentecost and the coming of the Holy Spirit to the church led to important actions by Christians in Jerusalem. Believers in the church focused on the apostles' teaching. They dedicated themselves to the community and the rich fellowship of being together. They shared meals together—including the Lord's Supper. They became a community of prayer as they prayed together. This brought "a sense of awe" to everyone as they saw the "many wonders and signs" God was doing through the apostles (v. 43, CEB).

The Holy Spirit brought unity to believers so they "shared everything" (v. 44, CEB). This included selling property and possessions. Believers would then "distribute the proceeds to everyone who needed them" (v. 45, CEB). There was a sharing in "gladness and simplicity" and praise for "God's goodness to everyone" (vv. 46-47, CEB).

The Spirit led to the sharing of all things and supporting the needs of the community. Being a disciple of Jesus affected the way a person lived amid the community of the Spirit, the church. The grace given to Christian believers stirred up a strong sense of gratitude to God and the desire to serve God by serving others.

. . . In Your Children's Experiences

Sharing is one of the first things we teach our children. We want them to understand that learning how to live with others with kindness, love, and compassion is a good thing. So we help them learn how to share a toy or share a hug. And we teach them this by our actions. Then we help them connect the act of sharing with God's love for them and how one of the most important things God wants is for us to love and care for other people. This story from the early church is a good one to help them learn that the very earliest Christians began their life together by sharing.

. . . In Your Relationships with the Children

Children of all ages have experienced both the act of sharing with someone and the act of receiving from someone. And this is a great time to invite them to share those stories. When the earliest Christian community lived together, they shared what they had. This story offers a great opportunity to help children look beneath the act of sharing to see what happens. Use questions like, "How does it feel when you share?" or "How did you feel when someone gave you something that you needed?" In this way, children can begin to see how acts of sharing help us grow together in love.

Dear God, help me to know the beauty of being part of a faith community. In Christ's name. Amen.



Supplies

Music & Melodies
(MM) 2023-2024

Stories, Colors & More
(SCM) i-iv, 13, 15

basic supplies
(see p. vii)

blanket or mats

snack

Guided Play

choice 1: blocks, toy
people

choice 3: plastic food,
utensils (optional)

Exploring

choice 2: business-
sized white envelopes
(Consider using
recycled business reply
envelopes.)

choice 3: twelve copies
of **Grace Notes (GN) 1**;
one copy each of **GN 2**
and **GN 3**

choice 4: copies of **GN 4**

GATHERING IN GOD'S GRACE

Before the Children Arrive

Designate a story corner and lay out a blanket or individual mats for the children so their backs will be to the door.

Use **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.

Select the activities that will work best for you and for your children. You do not need to do everything suggested!

“Exploring God’s Grace” choice 3 requires more prep.

Welcoming and Guided Play



Greet children as they arrive and say, “Grace and peace be with you.” Prompt them to respond, “And also with you.” Be sensitive to any children who might be coming for the first time. Introduce yourself to parents/caregivers you do not know. Tell the parents/caregivers that today’s story is about the beginning of the church.

Invite the children to choose a guided-play activity to start:

1. **Building Corner**—Invite the children to build a church building with blocks. Suggest that they add people. Wonder aloud what the people are doing in the church (praying, playing and singing, working in the kitchen, worshiping, inviting others, and so on). Invite them to add more people to their church building.
2. **Play Dough**—Begin with a large ball of play dough. Tell the children that you are playing with the play dough. Ask if anyone would like to play with it also. Divide the ball in two and give each half to two children. Ask if anyone else would like to play. Suggest that the children share their play dough by dividing it in two pieces and sharing one piece with another person. Repeat as necessary. Tell the children that, by sharing, everyone gets to play. Count how many pieces of play dough there are now.
3. **Share a Meal**—Tell the children that, in today’s story, church people gather together to break bread and share a meal together. Invite the children to play in the kitchen area to prepare a pretend meal together. Engage the children in conversation about what they are making, whose home they are eating in, and what stories about Jesus they could tell one another.

T Consider how much time your planned activities will take and adjust transition times according to remaining time available.



Transitioning to Story Time

Call the children to the story corner, playing and singing “Lord, I Want to Be a Christian”—**MM 13; SCM 15**. Repeat words and phrases as appropriate.

Follow Me

MS

Invite the children to repeat each line after you and follow your motions.

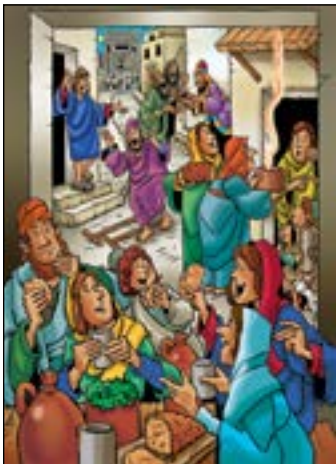
I am looking for God. (*cup hands around eyes*) /
I am following God. (*march in place.*) /
I am learning to share. (*move both hands away with palms up*) /
I am being kind. (*hug a neighbor’s shoulder*) /
I am loving God. (*cross hands over chest*) /

We Are God’s Family

A MS

Invite the children to repeat each line after you and follow your motions.

You and you and you and you, (*point to those in the circle*) /
are part of God’s big family. (*hug yourself*) /
I stretch my arms to hold you all, (*stretch arms around each child on each side*) /
a great big circle we will be. (*all hold hands together*) /
God’s arms reach around the world, (*stretch arms out wide*) /
and hold each child in loving care. (*hug yourself*) /
For God gives us all we need each day, (*pat yourself on the head*) /
and God loves it when we share. (*hug yourself and then stretch arms out wide*) /



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), www.pcusastore.com.

Hearing the Story

L C

Open the Bible to Acts 2 so the children know the story comes from the Bible. Tell the children that they are going to hear a story about the beginning of the church of the followers of Jesus.

Read **SCM 13**. Express the emotions of the story in your voice, gestures, and facial expressions. Conclude the story by prompting the children to say, “Amen.”

Read the story again. Engage the children in conversation about what activities the first followers of Jesus did together; for example: eating together, praying, playing, singing, sharing, telling stories about Jesus, and remembering the last supper Jesus had with his disciples.

As children name an activity, encourage them to tell you about their family eating together, praying, playing, singing, and so forth.



EXPLORING GOD'S GRACE

1. The Church Grows



Form two groups. Tell the children that they are going to act out activities that the first followers of Jesus might have done. Invite the children to think of three or four activities that people do together in church or as followers of Jesus. Or share the following ideas with each group and let them choose: singing; praying; celebrating communion; baptizing someone; reading the Bible; collecting an offering of money; helping neighbors who need food, clothing, or home repair; taking care of someone who is sick; giving money to someone in need; and so forth.

Have the groups take turns acting out one of the activities and the other group guessing what it is. After the groups have had a chance to act out several things the first followers of Jesus might have done, suggest that others saw what they were doing and wanted to join them. Invite the children to turn to each other and practice welcoming new people to the church.

Wonder together which activities people in your church do today. Comment that we do all the same activities in the church today!

LG *Providing opportunities for children to make decisions about how they can lead, offer help, and express generosity helps build their confidence. This also helps them learn that they are gifted members of your community.*

2. Adding People to the Church



Give each child a piece of 9" x 12" colored construction paper and a business-size white envelope. Have the children put glue on the address side of the envelope with the flap open and place it on their piece of construction paper. Set aside to dry for a few minutes. Give the children four to five craft sticks. Invite them to decorate them like people with faces at one end. Tell the children that the people have heard the stories of Jesus and seen the things the followers of Jesus do. They want to join the church. Give the children their envelopes and show them how to draw a cross on the top of the envelope (the steeple) and make a door and windows on the church building. Invite them to tuck their people inside the envelope pocket.



3. Following Jesus' Way

A B MS

Before the session, make twelve copies of **GN 1** on multicolored paper or card stock and cut out the footprint frame. Cut scenes from **GN 2** and **GN 3**. Attach one scene to the center section of each frame. Write on one end of four craft sticks the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, one number on each.

Create a path using the twelve footprint frames with pictures attached. Hold the craft sticks in your hand, hiding the numbers. Invite the children to take turns drawing a numbered craft stick from your hand—then returning it—to determine the number of steps they should take. The child will look at the picture on the footprints and act out what is on the picture only if it is a way to follow Jesus. If it is not a way to follow what Jesus taught us, the child will say, “Jesus does not want me to . . . (describe the action on the picture).” If the child lands on the same set of footprints as another child, they can act it out together again or act out a new way they can follow Jesus. Continue playing until all children have made it down the path. If footprints were skipped, collect them and one by one tell about the action depicted. Have the children march in place if it is a way to follow Jesus and sit down if it is not what Jesus taught.

Use “wonder” questions that do not force a child to remember facts. Wondering questions help a child think aloud. Answers are neither right nor wrong. They help teach children to speak from their hearts.

4. Coloring Page

C

Hand out copies of **GN 4** and crayons. Invite the children to color the picture. Engage the children in conversation as they color, using the following wondering questions:

- ▼ I wonder, “What stories about Jesus did the disciples tell to other people?”
- ▼ I wonder, “What did the disciples share with other people?”
- ▼ I wonder, “What did other people think about the followers of Jesus?”

T *Transition times can cause children to act out. Giving them something that they enjoy doing provides them with a way to deal with these times.*



LOVING AND SERVING GOD



Call the children together, playing and singing “Lord, I Want to Be a Christian”—**MM 13; SCM 15**. Repeat words and phrases as appropriate. Ask the children what stories about Jesus will they tell other people.

If you would like to share a snack, now would be a good time. Invite the children to repeat after you and follow your actions as you pray:

In our heart, (*hands over heart*) /
in our head, (*hands on head*) /
when we wake, (*point to eyes*) /
or go to bed, (*bend head onto folded hands as if sleeping*) /
we thank you, God. (*clap!*) /

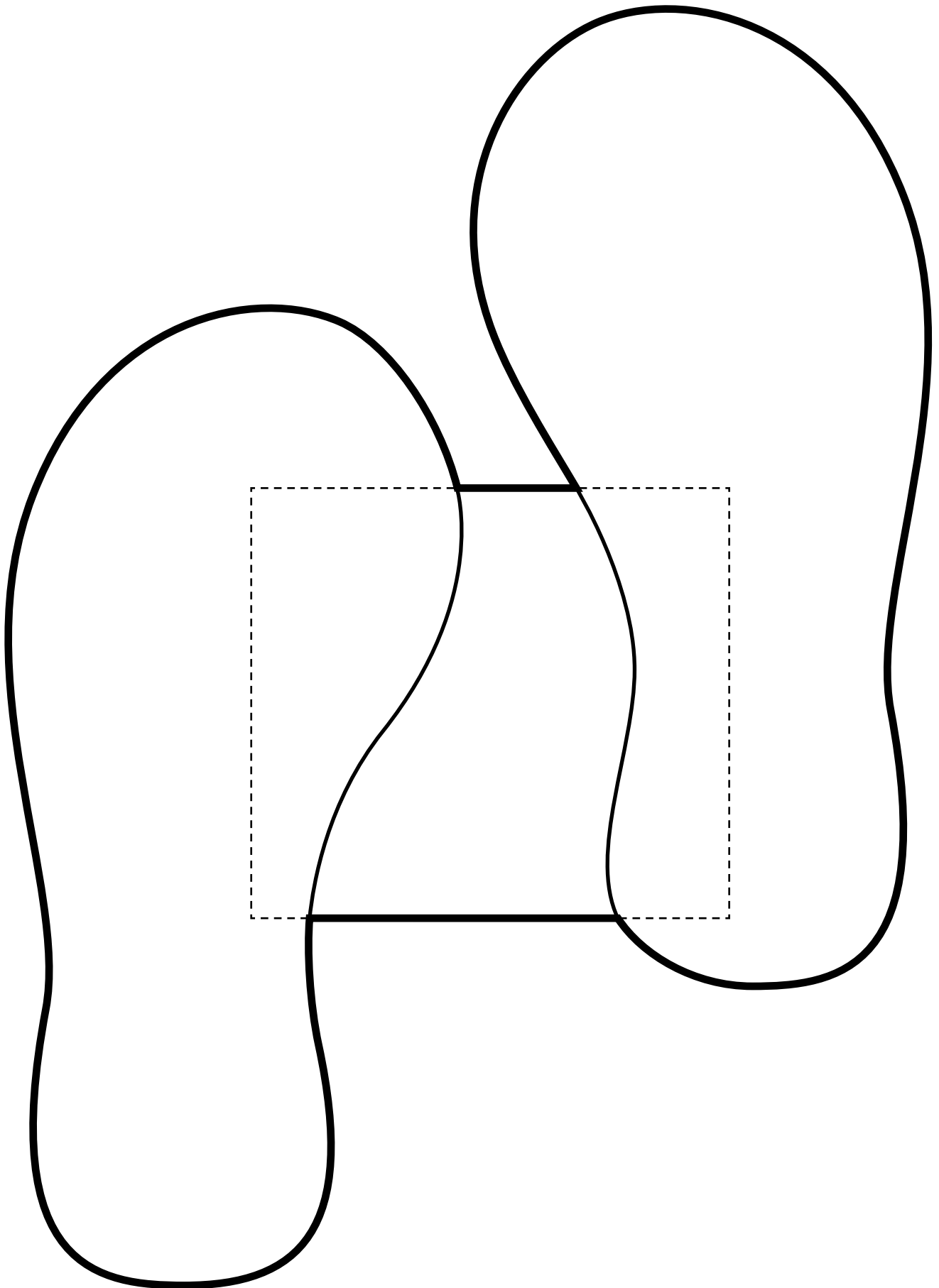
For our food (*pretend to eat*) /
and family, (*hands over heart*) /
for Lord Jesus (*hands in the air*) /
and you and me, (*point to someone else and self*) /
we thank you, God. (*clap!*) /

With our voices (*point to mouth*) /
and with our songs, (*move hand out from mouth*) /
we praise you, God, (*hands in the air*) /
all day long. (*wave hands back and forth*) /

As the children leave, bless each one, saying, “(Name), remember to pray and tell others about Jesus. The grace of God is with you.”



Ask parents and caregivers for their email addresses so you can send the Grace Sightings link, or invite them to visit www.pcusastore.com/GGGdownloads. Remind the parents and caregivers about the story audio (see p. vii).







Share Everything



The followers of Jesus help one another.

