



# Grain on the Sabbath

**Goal:** To explore how Jesus takes care of his friends.

## RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

### . . . In Mark 2:23-28

Jesus sometimes got in trouble with the religious leaders of his day. When his disciples began to pick some wheat on the Sabbath, leaders accused them of breaking the Sabbath law, which was that no work should be done on the Sabbath and “picking the heads of wheat” (v. 23; CEB) would be work.

Jesus appealed to an incident in the life of David when he gave his hungry friends bread that, according to the law, was reserved only for priests. This led Jesus to pronounce that “the Sabbath was created for humans; humans weren’t created for the Sabbath” (v. 27; CEB) and that the “Son of Man is lord even of the sabbath” (v. 28).

Jesus believed these rules or laws were hindering those in need—his hungry disciples. Even David showed that, sometimes, laws may be broken if there is a greater purpose involved. Jesus said he was “lord even of the sabbath” (v. 28). This means the example Jesus gives us—of loving and serving others, as he taught—is more important than the kinds of laws or rules that, otherwise, are good in themselves. We should always look for God’s grace and find ways of being grateful.

### . . . In Your Children’s Experiences

Children will have no problem naming rules that they have been taught are important. They have experience with rules at school, rules at home, and rules with sports or scouts. Inviting them to talk about a time when they broke a rule and knew why they were doing it offers a good introduction to this story about Jesus’ breaking the Sabbath rule and feeding hungry people. Older children will be able to understand the significance of breaking a rule for a good reason. Younger children will need help in understanding that, when you break a rule, you need to know why you did it.

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

Sabbath rest is a concept that may need to be explained to the children. A way to begin would be to talk with them about what Sunday (Sabbath) is like in their home. What makes this day special or different from the other six days? In preparation for reading the story, you can help them understand how the people in Jesus’ day rested on the Sabbath, which meant they did no work. Invite the children to talk about things they could do on the Sabbath that would help them rest and would require no work.

*Dear God, Jesus taught us that we can break the rules when we see someone in need. Open my eyes, O Lord. Amen.*

## Supplies

Music & Melodies  
(MM) 2023-2024

Stories, Colors & More  
(SCM) i-iv, 8, 8a, 14, 20

basic supplies  
(see p. vii)

blanket or mats

snack

## Guided Play

choice 3: small bell

## Exploring

choice 1: satchel made  
in “Welcoming and  
Guided Play” choice 1,  
round oat cereal

choice 2: copies of  
**Grace Notes (GN) 1**

choice 4: copies of **GN 2**



## 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 1 requires more prep.

### Welcoming and Guided Play

**F** **A** **B** **FM** **SD**

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 personally. Tell the parents/caregivers that today’s story is about Jesus when he took care of his friends when they were hungry. Invite the children to choose a guided-play activity to start:

- 1. Make a Satchel**—Provide folded sheets of construction paper with about five to seven holes punched along the two sides nearest the fold. Tie knots in one end of 2-foot lengths of yarn, or tape the yarn near the hole closest to the fold. Let the children lace the yarn up the sides from the fold to the opening. When both sides have been laced, help them tie a knot at the top to make the handle. This will make a satchel to gather grain in “Exploring God’s Grace” choice 1. Provide crayons for the children to color the satchels if they wish.
- 2. Kitchen Play**—Invite the children to play in a kitchen area, preparing and serving food to one another.
- 3. Acknowledging Sharing**—Invite the children to play with blocks or toys. Pay attention to sharing happening among the children. Acknowledge and praise sharing by ringing a bell and saying the child’s name. Children will want to be seen and acknowledged and will begin to do acts of sharing.

**T** *Transitions can be difficult for children. Do not force reluctant children to join a group activity. Instead, allow them to observe quietly from their own play area or to listen to a story read to them by an adult helper until they are ready to join the group.*



## Transitioning to Story Time T

When you sense the children are ready to move into group time, call them to the story corner, singing “With My Hands Open Wide”—**MM 20; SCM 20**. Repeat words and phrases as appropriate.

### Helper Song

Using the tune “If You’re Happy and You Know It,” teach the children the following song:

If you’re a helper and you know it,  
nod your head. (*nod, nod*)  
If you’re a helper and you know it,  
nod your head. (*nod, nod*)  
If you’re a helper and you know it,  
what you do will surely show it.  
If you’re a helper and you know it,  
nod your head. (*nod, nod*)

### We Are God’s Family TD

Invite the children to repeat after you and follow your actions:

You and you and you and you (*point to those in the circle*) /  
are part of God’s big family. (*hug self*) /  
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 self*) /  
For God gives us all we need each day (*pat head on top*) /  
and God loves it when we share. (*hug self 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](http://www.pcusastore.com).

### Hearing the Story L

Open the Bible to Mark 2 so the children know the story comes from the Bible. Tell the children that they are going to hear a story about Jesus taking care of his friends when they were hungry.

Show the picture of a grain field from **SCM 8a**. Read **SCM 8**. 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 and invite the children to respond with the motions when they hear the following words:

- ▼ Jesus—raise hands up in the air and say, “Yay!”
- ▼ Hungry—rub tummy and make a growling noise
- ▼ Grain—rub palms together



## EXPLORING GOD'S GRACE



### 1. Gathering Grain



Invite the children to string round oat cereal on pipe cleaners, filling each one about half way. Make a twist so the cereal does not fall down the stem and a bend at the top so the cereal does not fall off. Have each child make five stems. Place the stems of “grain” in cups around the room.

Tell the children that they are going to pretend they are Jesus’ disciples. Give them the satchels they made in “Guided Play” choice 1. Pretend to be Jesus and instruct the children to go out into the fields (the room) and pick five stems of grain.

Invite them back to the table and give each child a cup. They may eat the cereal (grain) from the stem or pick it off the stem and place it in the satchel or a cup, to eat. Invite everyone to say, “Praise God for this food!” rejoicing that they have food to eat.

### 2. Helper Badge



Provide copies of **GN 1** cut in half. Tell the children that they are going to make a badge that they can wear to remind them that they can be helpers too.

Read what the badge says, “Jesus helped his friends. I can be a helper too!” Invite the children to decorate their badges with crayons, markers, stickers, and so forth.

Assist the children in cutting the badge shape. Remind the children that Jesus helped his friends. Make tape circles to tape the badge on each child and say, “(Name), you are a helper too!”

### 3. Grain Game



Crumple a number of sheets of two colors of paper: two shades of yellow; yellow and green; or yellow and brown. Tell the children that they are going to play a game where they have to gather grain and then put it in baskets.

Form two teams and assign each team one of the colors of paper. Toss the balls of paper around the room. Tell the children that they need to gather their color of grain and bring it back to their spot.

Once they have gathered all the grain, set up two bags or boxes (whatever is available) on the other side of the room. Tell the children that, one by one, they need to carry a grain kernel to the container and return to their spot.



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 2** and crayons. Invite the children to color the picture of Jesus and his disciples picking grain. Engage the children in conversation as they color, using the following wondering questions:

- I wonder, “What did Jesus’ friends think when some people got upset at them for picking grain?”
- I wonder, “What did the grain kernels taste like?”
- I wonder, “How can we help people who are hungry?”

C *For some children, listening and speaking may take longer. Allow time for these children to feel truly a part of the session. Be patient and encourage other children to do the same.*

### LOVING AND SERVING GOD FA

Call the children together, singing “Jesus Says God Cares for Us”—**MM 12; SCM 14**. Repeat words and phrases as appropriate.

Remind the children that Jesus took care of his friends when they were hungry. Encourage the children to ask their families how they might help people who are hungry.

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:

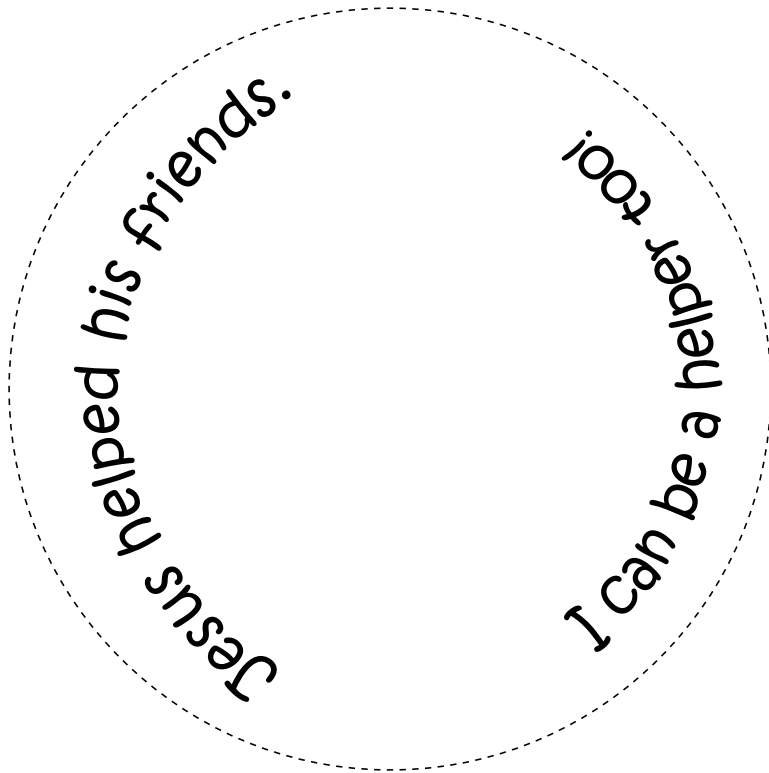
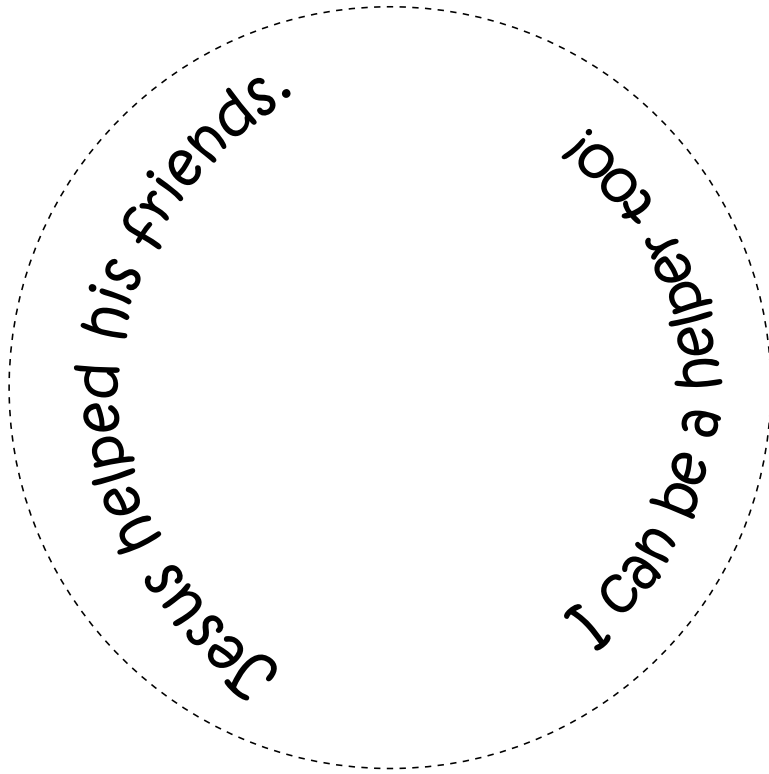
For food to eat, *(raise hands to mouth)* /  
and friends to share, *(hold hands out)* /  
for those we love everywhere, *(place hands over heart)* /  
we thank you, God. *(put hands together in prayer)* /

As the children leave, bless them: “(Name), you are God’s helper. Go and help others. The grace of God goes 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](http://www.pcusastore.com/GGGdownloads). Remind the parents and caregivers about the story audio (see p. vii).









# Grain on the Sabbath



Jesus breaks the Sabbath law to feed his hungry friends.

