



A Girl Shares Her Faith

Goal: To practice sharing our faith with others.

RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

. . . In 2 Kings 5:1-14

In the story of Naaman, the focus is often on the healing prescription required (dip seven times in the Jordan River) and the prophet Elisha. The catalyst to this story, however, is not found in the first verse describing a mighty warrior felled by one word, *leprosy*, but in the second verse where a young unnamed girl is introduced. This girl is actually an Israelite slave girl, taken captive in a raid. She is a servant, seen and not heard. She is a person utterly without power in a story that presents a stark contrast between the powerful and the powerless. The powerful warrior Naaman is powerless to change his situation or to bring about his own healing. The powerless young girl shares what she knows to be true; she shares her faith in God. She tells Naaman's wife, who in turn tells Naaman, who then repeats the girl's message word for word to the king as he seeks permission to go to the prophet of the God of Israel to be healed. The faith of the young slave girl has spread to the king of Aram. (Note: The Bible speaks of leprosy, but now this word is an outdated and often offensive term to describe what is known as Hansen's Disease.)

What courage it must have taken for her to offer hope for healing to her captors. She didn't owe them anything and didn't need to speak, but her faith in the God of Israel, the One who heals, was powerful. Something must have stirred in Naaman, because he not only heard her faith and conviction; he even told the king, word for word! The young maidservant most likely was not awarded her freedom or given any material reward. It seems likely that the only compensation this brave young girl received was the knowledge that the God of Israel and the prophet Elisha were indeed who she had said they were.

. . . In Your Children's Experiences

Children often find it difficult to speak up, to give a word of hope, or to offer their resources. People who are bigger, stronger, more powerful, and more knowledgeable surround them. A child who attempts to advise an adult risks being ignored, scolded, or ridiculed. Encouraging children to have agency with their ideas and opinions helps shape their confidence. The young maidservant became the catalyst to Naaman's conversion because she had the courage to share her faith in God. Who knows what spark is ignited or what seed is planted when faith is shared with another? Encouraging children to have agency with their faith may just change the world!

. . . In Your Relationships with the Children

Listen. Children feel valued when others listen to them and hear their stories and the feelings behind the stories. Talk about your faith and how you see God active in your life. This will model for the children how they can do that too. Encourage them to do the same.

*O God, may we have faith like the servant girl
and share it courageously with others. Amen.*



Supplies

Music & Melodies
(MM) 2023–2024

Stories, Colors & More
(SCM) i–iv, 11, 20, 24

basic supplies
(see p. vii)

story audio (see p. vii)

candle

green cloth

blue streamers, blue
fabric, containers, or
mural paper

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

Responding

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.

Welcoming and Preparing

LG M MS C L T

Welcome each child with “Grace and peace be with you, *(Name)*.” Prompt children to respond, “And also with you.” Invite children to help prepare the worship space with a candle, a green cloth, and a Bible. Have the children use a water theme to decorate the worship table as well. You may provide blue streamers, blue fabric, containers they may fill with water, or mural paper that they may use along with paints or markers to create a river. Encourage children to create a space that reminds them of being next to the water.

Ask some children to help prepare today’s “Responding in Gratitude” activities. Suggest that one or two prepare to lead today’s singing. Have one or two volunteers practice reading the Scripture passage.

As you all work to prepare the space, engage in discussion over what it means to share our faith with others. Suggest that we talk about sharing a toy, a snack, or the television remote, but discuss together what it means to share our faith with others. Invite the children to share their ideas.

MS *As you prepare your area, think about the space children need to maneuver a wheelchair, a walker, leg casts, or crutches. Make sure all children are comfortable in the setting.*

Singing

Play and sing together “Sing Thanks to God”—**MM 23; SCM 20**. Encourage the children to follow the actions in the song (sing, clap, dance, shout, and praise).

Praying

MS

Turn on the candle. Invite children to stand in a circle, arm’s-length apart. Lead them in the following motions:

- ▼ Stretch arms up high.
- ▼ Bend at the waist as fingertips dangle toward the floor.
- ▼ Stand up straight and twist at the waist to the right, then to the left.
- ▼ Take two steps inward and link elbows with the people on either side.



Invite them to repeat after you as you lead this echo prayer:

God, lead us /
to be humble, /
and by your grace /
help us to share our faith with others. /
Amen. /

Preparing to Hear the Story

Offer that today's story is about a mighty warrior named Naaman who needed help, and that a young girl, the prophet Elisha, and Naaman's servants all played important parts in offering him the help he needed.



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

Invite a child to find 2 Kings 5 in the Bible. Invite a volunteer to read 2 Kings 5:1-14. Place the open Bible on the worship table. Conclude the reading by saying, "Word of wisdom, Word of grace," and prompt the children to say, "Thanks be to God."

Provide a copy of **GN 1** and a pencil to each child. Encourage children to listen to the story you will read. Tell them to record in their own words what one of the characters might have said. Read **SCM 11**, a retelling of the story, or listen to the story audio. If you are reading, use your tone and expressions to make the story most engaging. Pause after paragraphs [1], [2], [4], and [5], offering children the chance to hear, reflect, and record in the speech bubbles. Encourage the children to use their imaginations. After the story, invite children to share what they have written in their speech bubbles.

Reflecting on God's Grace

Engage the children in conversation, using the following questions:

- How did the young girl share her faith?
- Why do you think Naaman thought he was too important to follow Elisha's instructions?
- Imagining you were one of Naaman's servants, what might you have been saying to your friends before you ran after him?
- What did this story make you wonder about?

Singing

B

Sing, clap, and dance to "God's Love for Us Is Truly Amazing (El amor de Dios es maravilloso)"—**MM 29**; **SCM 24**—encouraging children to sing the words in both English and Spanish.

Turn off the candle.

- B** *When using another language, encourage children to try, even if what they say isn't perfect. Remind children to respect others and be polite.*



RESPONDING IN GRATITUDE

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

Claiming God's Grace



Tell the children that, like the effect the young girl's words had on Naaman, sometimes it takes the words of just one person to have an effect on you. Have the children look at what they wrote in the speech bubbles completed during "Hearing the Story."

Suggest that each child probably has people in their life who have shared their faith with them or told them about Jesus or stories in the Bible. Invite the children to sit quietly for a moment as they think about who those people are; then ask them to focus on only one.

Tell the children to flip their papers over and use the blank side to draw a picture of the person they are thinking of and a speech bubble. Challenge the children to fill it with words they recall this person using to share their faith. Assist with writing as needed. Invite the children to take turns telling about the people they have drawn and what is in their speech bubbles.

Praying God's Grace



Remind the children that the young girl saw that Naaman was suffering from leprosy and she knew that God could heal him. She believed in what God could do and wished to share that with Naaman. Encourage children that we can share our faith by praying for others who are suffering.

Invite children to take an index card and write the name or draw a picture of someone they know who is ill or suffering in some way. After they have completed their cards, have them place them in the center of the worship table. Tell the children that, when we pray for others, it is sometimes called a prayer of *intercession* or *supplication*. Explain that those big words mean that we are asking God for something for someone else.

Lead the children in the prayer, inviting them to repeat "Gracious God, hear our prayer" after each of your petitions.

Dear God, we come to you, thinking of others and praying for them.

Gracious God, hear our prayer.

We pray for those we have named on our index cards.

Gracious God, hear our prayer.

We ask that you comfort those who are hurting.

Gracious God, hear our prayer.

We ask that you provide care for those who are sick.

Gracious God, hear our prayer.



May we help provide comfort and care to those in need.
Gracious God, hear our prayer.
Amen.

Invite the children to pick up their card, take it home, and commit to praying for the person throughout the week.

Offering God's Grace



The young girl did a small thing in suggesting that Naaman go see Elisha for help. That small thing resulted in something great for Naaman. Brainstorm some small ways you could serve others as they arrive or leave for worship today, such as open the doors to greet people as they come in the church, pick up trash from the pews following the service, clean up toys in the nursery, or wash dishes in the kitchen. Decide on something your group can do to serve that would be meaningful in your context. Encourage children that even small acts of service are ways we can share our faith with others and that they should look for ways this week to do small things to serve others in their school or home.

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.*

Extra Activity



Tell the children they will play a game to help them share their faith with others. Hand out copies of **GN 2** and scissors. Have the children cut out their faith-sharing tool. Use the following directions with the diagrams on the bottom of their paper.

- ▼ Cut out the square.
- ▼ Fold the square in half horizontally from side to side; open and fold in half vertically in the other direction and then open. Fold each of the corners into the center.
- ▼ Turn it over, so the folded points face down.
- ▼ Fold each of the corners to the center.
- ▼ Fold it in half, forming a rectangle; open and fold in half in the opposite direction.
- ▼ Flip it back over and put a thumb or forefinger into each flap.
- ▼ Slip your fingers all the way up to the corners and then bring your fingers together.

Form pairs of children to play. The players in turn:

- ▼ Choose one of the numbers in the top four squares.
- ▼ Open and close while counting the number chosen.



- ▼ Select one of the actions, do it, and then spell the word(s) while opening and closing the faith sharer once for each letter in the word(s).
- ▼ Choose again. Do the action and then open the panel under the word(s) and have the player follow the directions.
- ▼ Switch turns and play again.
- ▼ Challenge the children to take their faith sharers home and use them with their family.

LOVING AND SERVING GOD



Lead children in cleaning up the worship space.

Wonder together about different ways that people share their faith, such as telling a story about God's actions in their life, telling a story about Jesus, helping another person, being kind or loving, forgiving another person, and so forth. Suggest that sharing faith sometimes uses words and sometimes uses actions. Ask the children how they might share their faith with another person in the coming week.

Pray the following prayer, or one of your own choosing:

Dear God, thank you for this story that reminds us to share you with others. Help us to see opportunities to tell about your goodness and grace. Amen.

As children leave, bless each one, saying, “(Name), in words or actions, share your faith with others. May God’s grace be 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).



<p>1</p> <p>HUG</p> <p>Tell a favorite Bible story.</p> <p>ELBOW BUMP</p> <p>Name a person who has shared faith with you.</p>	<p>2</p> <p>FIST BUMP</p> <p>Tell about a time when you recognized God in your life.</p> <p>HIGH-FIVE</p> <p>Name a person you have shared your faith with.</p>
<p>3</p> <p>WINK</p> <p>Share an act of faith.</p> <p>SMILE</p> <p>Tell a story about Jesus.</p>	<p>4</p> <p>SHAKE HANDS</p> <p>Name something you like about church.</p> <p>CLAP</p> <p>Share how your faith helps you.</p>



