



Noah and the Ark

Goal: To tell the story of God's promises.

RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

. . . In Genesis 7–8:19

Genesis 7–8:19 tells the story of the destruction of the world by a flood, and the survival of one family and a host of animals. This biblical story is paralleled in other ancient writings, particularly from the Egyptian and Babylonian religions. In each case, a disappointed grieved creator elects to eliminate unfaithful humanity, sparing only a few faithful people. In Genesis, Noah is said to be a righteous man (6:9) who was blameless among the people and who “walked with God.” This claim is lived out as Noah’s family obediently builds the ark, attentive to God’s instructions. This “good person” who is saved by building a boat is common to the other flood stories.

Unique to Genesis, however, is the description of God as a creator who promises never again to destroy humankind. Many different retellings have been woven together in Genesis. Skillful editors wove together parallel stories from various regions and periods in Israel’s history. In chapter 6, God tells Noah to take two of each creature into the ark. In chapter 7, God tells him to take seven pairs of each “clean” animal and one pair of each “unclean” animal. Many other repetitions and variances appear in the text, such as the length of the flood and the instructions to Noah. The story says Noah was six hundred years old when he built the ark, although his three sons are only about one hundred years old (5:32). This may be due to biblical reporting that assigns all that is done to the patriarch of the house, or the storyteller’s way of underlining Noah’s goodness as evidenced by his long life.

. . . In Your Children’s Experiences

This most familiar story of the flood that covered the earth and the role of Noah and his family often is found illustrated with murals on the walls of our churches. It is a story about a family who lost everything and then was able to recover. Children will be able to share their own experiences of loss or stories about the violence of nature. Losing and finding are the major themes in this story and in our own lives. The other theme that is easily connected with the lives of children is the thankfulness of Noah and his family after the flood was over.

. . . In Your Relationships with the Children

Children will be able to imagine what it might have been like to be a member of Noah’s family on the ark. Encourage their funny and wise observations as they hear this story. Be ready to engage the literal questions of younger children and the more probing reflections of older children. Be prepared to receive and respond to their observations about this story of loss and recovery. In the end of the story, we hear how Noah and his family expressed their thankfulness to God. Invite children to offer their own prayers of thanksgiving as you end the session.

*O, God, I trust that you do not send evil into my life,
but that you are present, helping to restore new life. Amen.*



Supplies

basic supplies
(see p. vii)

glass bowl

pitcher of water

Stories, Colors & More
(SCM) 2, 39, 45–48

Music & Melodies (MM)
2016–2017

story audio (see p. vii)

Responding

Claiming

sentence strips from
Grace Notes (GN) 1
container

Celebrating

graham crackers,
bananas, table knife,
animal crackers, juice

Praying

copies of **GN 2**
white crayons
watercolor paints

Bonus Activity

copies of **GN 3**

GATHERING IN GOD'S GRACE

Post **SCM 45–46**. Use the visual schedule to provide clear expectations and a visual cue for the group.

See **SCM 47–48** 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” and “Offering God’s Grace” require more prep.

Welcoming and Preparing

LG A B M MS

Welcome the children and parents as they arrive by saying, “Grace and peace to you.” Prompt the response, “And also with you.”

Tell the children that today’s story is about Noah and the ark. Some children will be familiar with the story, but others may not. If needed, explain that the ark was a big boat in which Noah took lots of animals.

Ask a few older children to hang a long sheet of paper or several sheets of newsprint on a wall. Invite all of the children to draw pictures of things inside Noah’s ark. The children may draw animals, Noah’s family, or other things they imagine were on the ark.

While the children draw, wonder aloud:

- ▼ If you were going to spend a long time on a boat, what would you take?
- ▼ What do you remember about the story of Noah’s ark?
- ▼ Which animals would you like to feed on the ark?

Invite the group to build an ark by moving chairs into a boat-shaped pattern. Use the mural as one inside wall of the ark.

Singing

Invite the group to sit in the ark to hear the story.

Play “Our God, Fills Us with Love and Joy”—**MM 22, SCM 39**. Play through the first verse of the song on the CD as the children listen. Play the song again, inviting the children to sing along. Suggest the children add motions to the song.

Praying

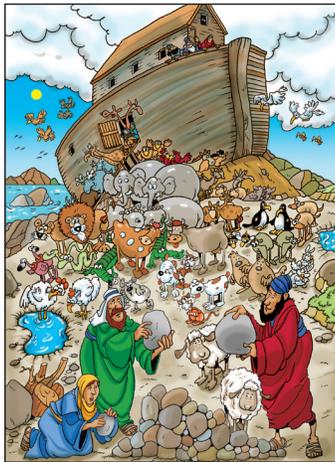
Turn on the candle. Let a child pour water into the glass bowl and place it in the center of the table. Use the words of Psalm 29:10–11 as an echo prayer:

The LORD sits enthroned over the flood; /
the LORD sits enthroned as king forever. /
May the LORD give strength to [the] people! /
May the LORD bless [the] people with peace! /



Preparing to Hear the Story C

Tell the children to imagine that there is going to be a great flood. They have just a few minutes to prepare. They can bring one change of clothes and five other things. What five things will they bring with them? Why? Once they have had time to discuss, ask each child to add to the mural one item that they would bring.



Hearing the Story C

Show the children where to find the story in the Bible (Genesis 7–8). Tell the children that Genesis is in the Old Testament; in fact, it is the very first book of the Bible.

Ask the children to sit inside the ark you built in “Welcoming and Preparing” and to imagine that they are inside the ark while the story is being read. Invite them to move as if the waves are moving the ark.

Encourage the children to listen as you tell the story from **SCM 2**, or invite a volunteer to read it. Use your voice, expressions, feelings, and body to make the story livelier. Vary the tone, speed, and pitch of your voice to indicate changes in mood.

Go outside the ark and tell the story again, inviting the children to participate using the ark and the other props. One or two children may want to pretend to be Noah, his wife, and their children to show the action of the story. Some children may want to move the animals they made. Suggest that the children make the sounds of their animals while moving them around.

Conclude by saying, “Word of wisdom, word of grace,” and prompt the children to say, “Thanks be to God.”

Reflecting on God’s Grace

Have the children find a comfortable place to sit. Suggest that they not sit too close to another person. Invite them to close their eyes and listen as you pose possibilities for them to consider:

Imagine you are Noah. What are you doing? How do you feel about being on the ark? What do you think you will find when the earth is finally dry again? How has your family responded to being on the ark?

Imagine you are a member of Noah’s family. What did you think when Noah started building a boat on dry land?

What is your job on the ark? What’s the first thing you want to do when you get off the ark?

Imagine you are an animal on the ark. Which animal are you?



What do you like about living on the ark? What do you miss about living on land?

Imagine you are Noah as the ark settles on dry land. What do you see? How do you feel about being out of the ark? Why do you build the altar for God?

Invite the children to open their eyes. Give them an opportunity to talk about the thoughts and feelings that occurred to them as they pondered the questions.

Singing

Play, sing, and dance to “Our God, Fills Us with Love and Joy”—MM 22, SCM 39. Turn off the candle.

RESPONDING IN GRATITUDE

Select activities appropriate for your group and the time available.

Claiming God’s Grace

Cut apart the sentence strips on GN 1 and put them in a container. A blank strip is provided for you to add an action specific to your church. Form two teams to play a variation of charades. One person comes to the front, draws a strip of paper from the container, and acts out the suggested Earth-saving activity. Both teams try to guess what it is. The first team to do so has a team member draw the next slip.

After the game, wonder together what things might you need to do (or recycle or save) to survive for forty days if your home were the ark.



Celebrating God’s Grace



Cut bananas in half lengthwise, enough for each child to have one half. Have the children put their banana halves facedown on a plate. Demonstrate to the children how to insert two graham crackers into the banana to form a “V” shape that looks like the ark. Stand animal crackers inside the “ark” by pushing them slightly into the banana.

Enjoy your snack as you talk about the different animals that went into the ark. Wonder with the children:

- ▼ How did the animals from far away get to the ark?
- ▼ How did they know to come?
- ▼ What kinds of food and how much did Noah have to take to feed all of the animals on the ark?
- ▼ How did Noah serve God?
- ▼ What do you think the people ate?

God fulfilled his promise to take care of Noah, his family, and the animals. How does God take care of you?



Praying God's Grace

Invite the children to recall the first thing Noah did when he got off the ark (*built an altar and worshiped God*). Then explain that we no longer build altars and make sacrifices as Noah did, but we still offer thanks to God.

Give each person a copy of **GN 2**. Have the children use white crayons to write *Thank you, God* on the rock. Provide watercolor paints and paintbrushes. Encourage the children to paint the entire surface of the stone. Comment that even when the paint covers the writing, the words still show through. Allow a little time for the paint to dry.

While the rock paintings are drying, invite the children to consider what Noah and his family may have said or done during their time of worship. Invite a couple of children to describe Noah's act of worship.

When the paintings are dry, have the children cut out their rocks. Suggest that the children build an altar on mural paper by gluing or taping the rocks in place.

Share the mural with your congregation by hanging it where all can see it.



Offering God's Grace



Before the session, contact a local animal shelter and ask how your group might contribute to its work. Perhaps the children could collect money to buy a week's supply of food or to provide veterinary care. They might create posters promoting animal vaccinations.

Share the information you have gathered with the children. Together decide on an animal action project they might undertake. Make concrete plans to carry it out over the next three sessions. Record the plans on paper.

Bonus Activity

Hand out copies of **GN 3**. Invite the children to find the pairs of animals. Have them write the letter of the animal from the bottom half of the sheet on the line for the matching animal at the top.

While the children work, wonder together:

- ▼ What promise did God make to Noah?
- ▼ How did God care for Noah, his family, and the animals?
- ▼ What promises does God make to us?
- ▼ How does God care for us?
- ▼ How does God help us care for one another?
- ▼ What might it be like to be in a big flood?
- ▼ What would you try to save?

Encourage the children to take their puzzles home to remind them to share Noah's story with their families.

Puzzle solution:

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



LOVING AND SERVING GOD



Give each child an opportunity to tell what he or she has learned about the story of Noah.

Gather near the bowl of water you used in “Praying” at the beginning of the session. Share that when people are baptized, Noah is mentioned as a sign of how God’s grace gives us second chances and promises to be with us always. Remind the children that whether they are baptized or not, water is a sign to them of God’s grace. Hold the bowl for the child next to you and invite the child to dip his or her fingers or hands into the water. Say:

“Remember your baptism and be thankful.”

Ask that child to hold the bowl for the next child, and so on around the circle. End by saying:

“The peace of Christ be with you. Amen.”

Charge the children to remember that the God of Noah is also their God, that God loves them, and that God cares for them. Challenge them to keep their promises and find ways to serve others in Jesus’ name.

Keep the ark mural for next week.

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

Recycle aluminum cans.

Reuse things as much as you can.

Turn off electric lights.

Ride a bike instead of going in a car.

Turn off the faucet while brushing your teeth.

Recycle paper or cardboard.

Plant a tree.

Make a bird feeder.

Snip plastic six-pack rings so fish and birds will not be trapped in them.

Throw your litter into trash containers.

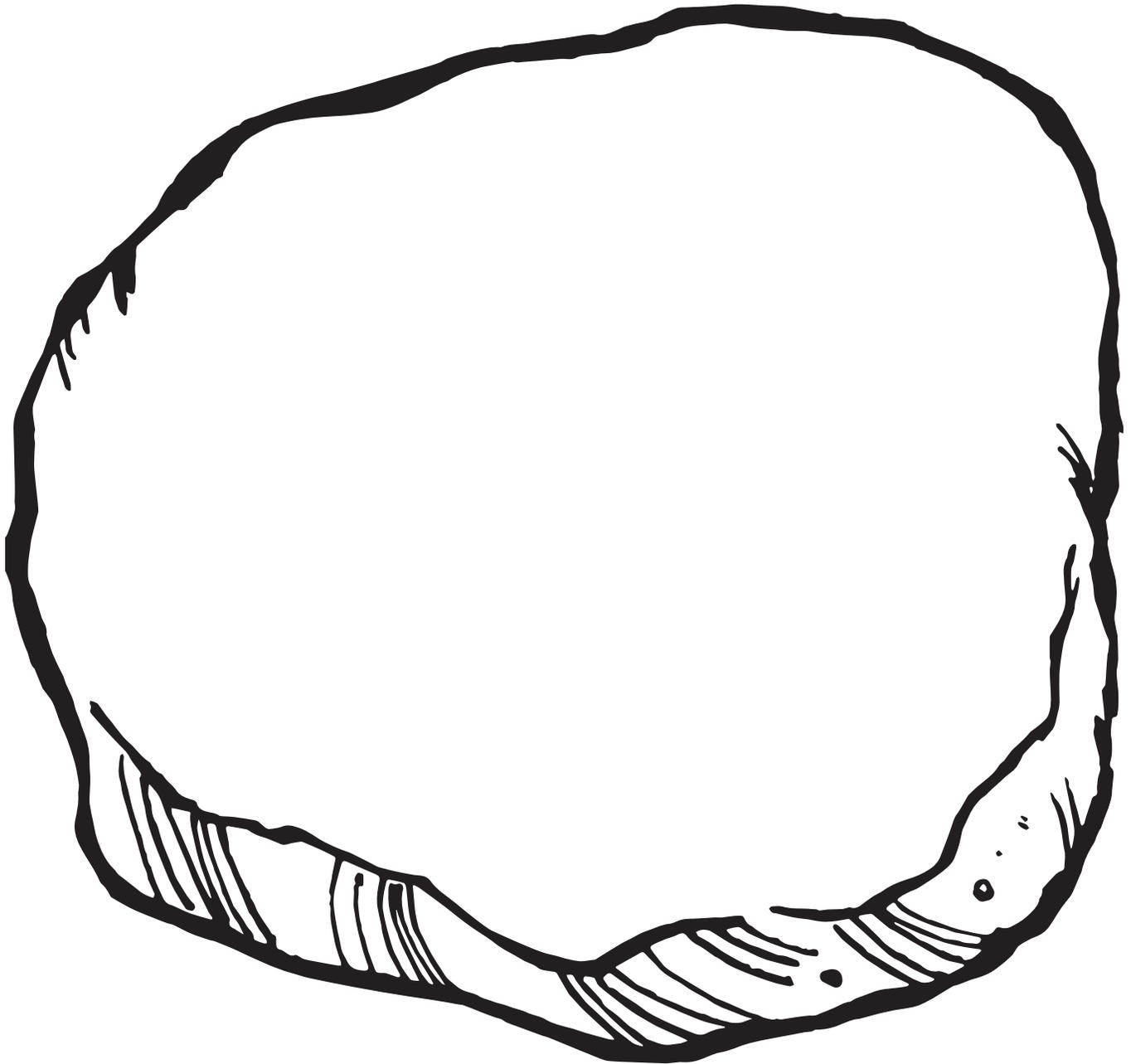
Pick up litter that you find on the ground.

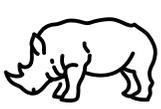
Do not release helium balloons into the air.

Plant flowers.

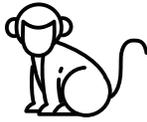
Make signs about protecting the environment.

Close the refrigerator door as soon as you get what you need.

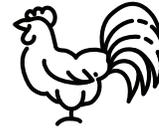


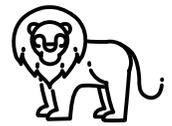




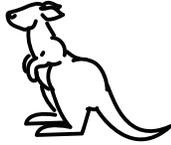








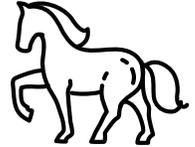


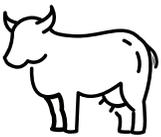










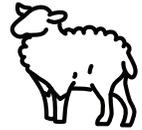




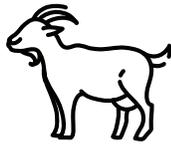


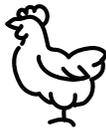






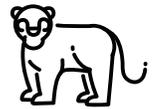














A



B



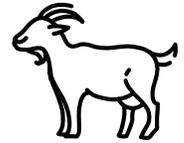
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D



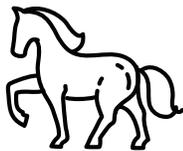
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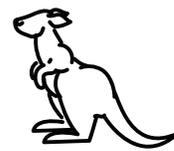
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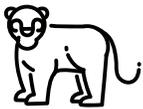
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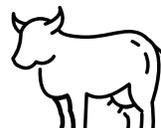
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T



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V



W



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