



Noah and the Ark

Goal: To act faithfully as Noah did.

RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

. . . In Genesis 6:8-8:22

The story of Noah and the ark is a familiar one, and one we have made bright and colorful in picture books, toys, and nursery art. A boat with friendly animals, two of each, bouncing on waves is easy to imagine. The biblical story, however, tells of the destruction of the world by a flood as a direct result to the violence and corruption of humanity. This text is paralleled in other ancient writings, particularly from the Egyptian and Babylonian religions. Needless to say, the human narrative necessitated a do-over, regardless of who was telling the story. Unique to Genesis, however, is the description of God as a creator who promises never again to destroy the earth or humankind.

Instructions are given to one man, Noah, and his family, because he was said to be a righteous man (6:9) who was blameless among the people and who “walked with God.” Throughout his life, it would seem, he followed God’s ways, even in the midst of the sin and chaos of the time. Certainly he had other choices he could make, but he trusted God without knowing the outcome of his story. In the same manner, Noah responded to God’s call to build a gigantic boat. He acted faithfully without knowing anything more than to build the ark and gather the animals. The story reveals faithfulness in the midst of sinfulness and trust when the seemingly impossible and ridiculous (a big boat and all those animals) is required.

. . . In Your Children’s Experiences

Children see and hear about the worst in people and about natural disasters that destroy parts of our earth. It is easy to think this is the end of the world. Why wouldn’t God just want to start over? Children may share their own experiences of loss or stories about the violence of nature. Trusting God when the outcome is unknown is a major theme in this story. Children need reassurance that God is faithful to God’s promise to care for the earth and God’s people no matter what.

. . . 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, let me be faithful when you call on me, for I may not know the reasons or what may be in store. I trust you. Amen.



Supplies

Music & Melodies
(MM) 2023–2024

Stories, Colors & More
(SCM) i–iv, 1, 14

basic supplies
(see p. vii)

story audio (see p. vii)

candle

green cloth

Responding

Celebrating

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

Praying

copies of **Grace Notes**
(GN) 1, white crayons,
watercolor paints

Extra

copies of **GN 2**

GATHERING IN GOD’S GRACE

Before the children arrive, post **SCM i–ii**, “Your Visual Schedule.” Cut out and glue the arrow marker on a clothespin. Use the 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 A B M MS

Welcome the children and parents/caregivers 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.

Invite children to set up a worship space with a green cloth, a candle, and a Bible. Ask a few children to help prepare any “Responding in Gratitude” activities you may be doing today. Suggest that one or two prepare to lead today’s singing.

Hang mural 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 pictures as one inside wall of the ark.

Singing

MS

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

Play “Rise and Shine”—**MM 1; SCM 14**—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. Invite the children to share one glad thing (a happy moment) and one sad thing (a concern or worry) from their week. Prompt the children to respond to each share with “Hear our prayer, gracious God.”

Affirm each child’s response and respect those who do not wish to share.

Some SCMs are used throughout the quarter. It is a good idea to keep them in an envelope or folder for further use.



Be sensitive to children who have experienced a natural disaster or who have had to leave their home and belongings behind.



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.

Preparing to Hear the Story C

Tell the children to imagine that God has asked them to do something unusual and they have just a few minutes to prepare for their task. 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 B L

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.

Invite a child to find Genesis 7 in the Bible. Tell the children that Genesis is in the Old Testament; in fact, it is the very first book of the Bible. Read **SCM 1**. Conclude the reading by saying, “Word of wisdom, Word of grace,” and prompt the children to say, “Thanks be to God.” Place the open Bible in the worship area.

Read the story again or listen to the story audio. Invite the children to pretend they are in the story: building the ark, being the animals, making the sound of the rain, and giving thanks.

Reflecting on God's Grace M C

Have the children find a comfortable place to sit. Suggest that they not sit close enough to be touching another person. Invite them to close their eyes and listen as you pose possibilities for them to consider. After each time of imagination, invite the children to share their thoughts.

- ▼ 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?

M *Sitting quietly for a prayer may be difficult for some children. Consider having them hold something, such as the Bible, giving them something to focus on as well as providing an important role for them.*



Singing

Play and sing “Rise and Shine”—**MM 1; SCM 14**—using the motions created earlier. Turn off the candle.

RESPONDING IN GRATITUDE

Select activities appropriate for your group and the time available.

Claiming God’s Grace



Remind the children that God asked Noah to do something that seemed kind of crazy at the time. Ask them what that task was (*to build a giant boat, or ark, and bring two each of all the animals onto it*). Wonder together how Noah’s neighbors and townspeople might have reacted or what they might have said to Noah about building a big boat and gathering up lots of animals. Ask the children why they think Noah did what God asked him to do. Suggest, if necessary, that Noah was faithful and followed God.

Play a game with the children, reinforcing that, even when asked to do something that seemed silly, Noah was faithful to God. Invite the children to gather in the middle of your space. Give them the following directions:

- ▼ When you say, “Get the wood,” they need to run to the right side of the space and pretend to chop and saw wood.
- ▼ When you say, “Build the ark,” they need to run to the left side of the space and pretend to hammer.
- ▼ When you say, “Bring the animals,” they need to find a partner, run to the center of the space, and pretend to be the same animal, moving and/or making sounds like that animal. If you have an odd number of children, tell the children someone may grab you to make a pair!
- ▼ When you ask, “What did the neighbors say?” they need to stop whatever they are doing and laugh and point, saying, “Ha! Ha! Ha! Silly Noah!”
- ▼ When you ask, “Why did Noah build the ark?” they need to stop whatever they are doing, point up, and say, “Noah was faithful to God!”

Practice the directions and then play the game. Give directions in any order you choose, repeating directions as you wish. Keep the pace brisk so that the children are moving from one action to another.



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

FA *Many children have food and other allergies such as peanut, egg, latex, and gluten. Be aware of all allergy issues to keep children safe.*

Praying God's Grace



Ask the children to recall the first thing Noah and his family did when they got off the ark. Remind them, if necessary, that they built an altar and worshiped God, giving thanks to God for keeping them safe. Explain to the children that this was the custom of the time. Ask them what we do now to give thanks to God.

Give each person a copy of **GN 1**. Have the children use white crayons to write "Thank you, God" on the picture of the rock. Suggest that they press hard with the crayon or go over the letters several times. 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. 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.



GN 2 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

Extra Activity

Hand out copies of **GN 2**. 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.

After they have finished, wonder together:

- What did God ask Noah to do?
- How did God care for Noah, his family, and the animals?
- How does God care for us?
- How can we care for one another as Noah cared for his family?

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

LOVING AND SERVING GOD



Give each child an opportunity to tell what he or she has learned about the story of Noah. Lead the children in an echo prayer:

Dear God, /
thank you for loving us so much. /
We want to be like Noah, /
who trusted your promises and obeyed you. /
Give us the courage and strength to obey. /
Amen. /

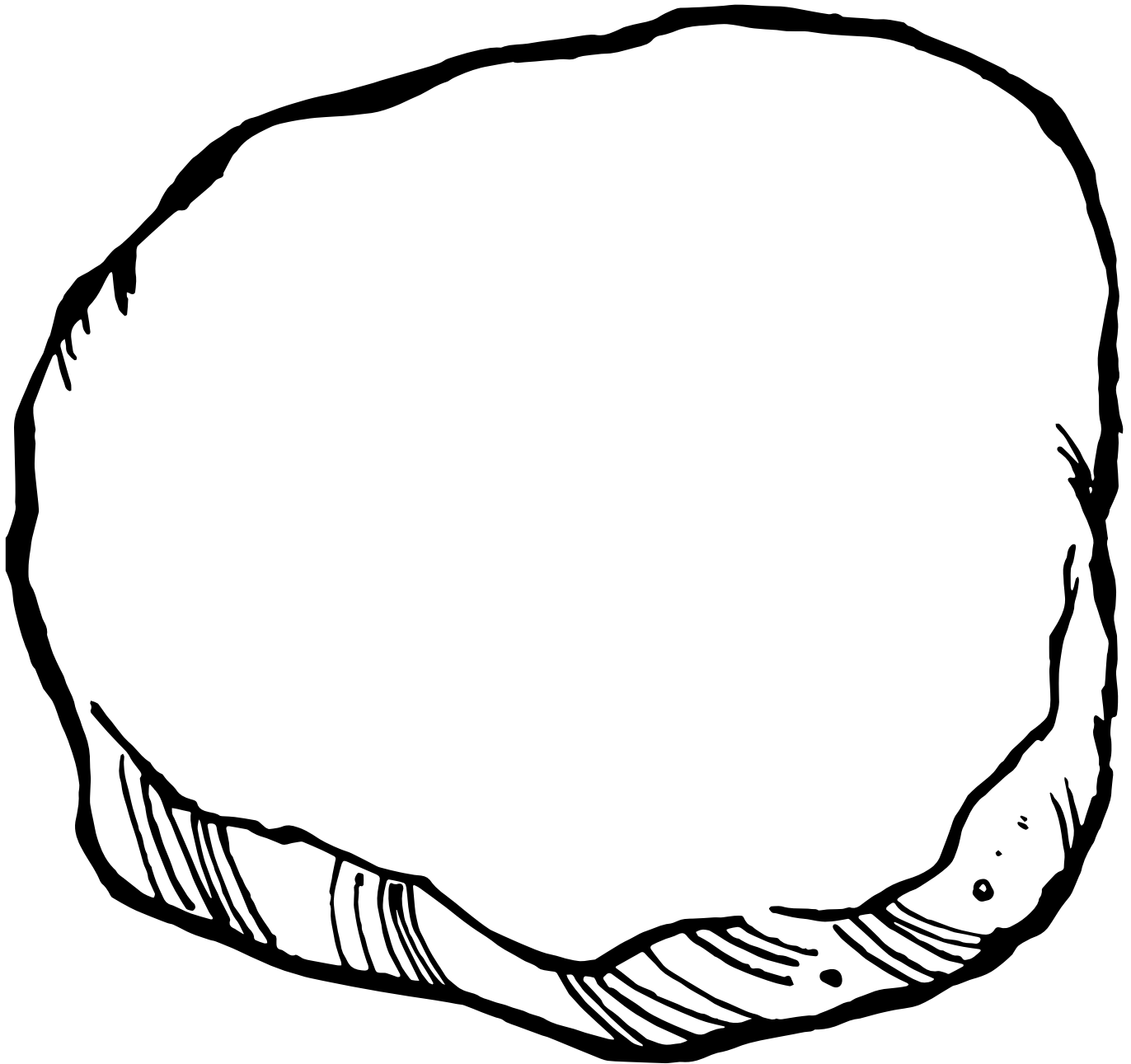
Keep the ark mural for next week.

Gather near the mural of the ark. Charge the children to remember that the God of Noah is also their God, that God loves them, and that God cares for them. As each child leaves, use one of the following fun ways to say goodbye, inviting the children to act out the animal you mention in response:



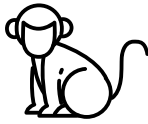
Ask parents and caregivers for their email addresses so you can send the Grace Sightings link, or invite them to visit www.pcusastore.com/GGGdownloads. Remind the parents and caregivers about the story audio (see p. vii).

See you later, alligator.
After while, crocodile.
Better shake, rattlesnake.
Chop chop, bunny hop.
Shoo, scat, little cat.
See you soon, baboon.
Give a hug, ladybug.
Leaving now, brown cow.
Gotta go, buffalo.
Bye bye, butterfly.
Leaving you, kangaroo.
Out the door, dinosaur.
Take care, polar bear.

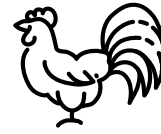


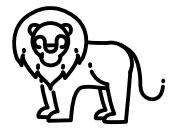












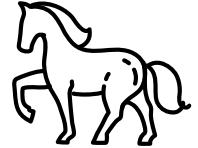


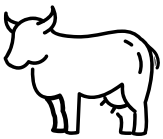














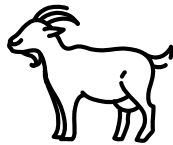








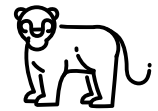














A



B



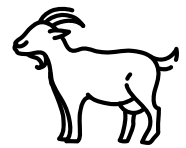
C



D



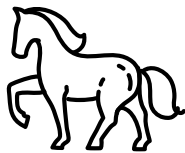
E



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K



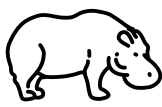
L



M



N



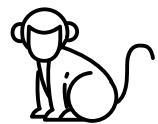
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P



Q



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V



W



X

