



Rainbow Promise

Goal: To remember the story of Noah and God's promise.

RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

. . . In Genesis 8:22; 9:8-17

Genesis 8:22-9:17 continues the story of the flood. This time, the waters have receded, and Noah and his family have set foot on dry land once more. Noah makes a burnt offering, and God responds by making a promise to never again destroy creation. The bow is hung in the sky. This rainbow image is a significant one in the story. Accompanying the image of the rainbow is the promise, or covenant, that God makes with Noah and all future generations. God promises never again to "destroy all flesh." The phrase in Hebrew that the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible translates as "all flesh" might mean all human beings, but more likely means all living creatures on earth. The scope of this covenant is vast, encompassing all of life. The other significant feature of this covenant is that it is unconditional. Later covenants, such as the covenant with Moses, are two-way agreements, with conditions binding on God's people. The covenant with Noah has no such conditions. God promises to sustain life on earth in an ongoing cycle of day and night, season upon season (8:22). The story of Noah assures us of the vast scope and timelessness of God's life-sustaining promise.

. . . In Your Children's Experiences

The image of a rainbow is always a source of surprise and joy when seen in the sky. It is a symbol of promise and hope for us across time. Children will be able to share stories about times when they have seen a bow in the sky. Help them connect this action of God as a symbol of hope and care. As they hear this story, invite them to listen for the things Noah did and for the promises God made to him. Also invite them to think about why this is a story of God's love.

. . . In Your Relationships with the Children

As you continue sharing the story of Noah and what happened after the flood, the concept of a covenant or promise will be introduced. Children can connect with this story by sharing promises made to them or by them. They also will be able to distinguish between a promise for a particular action and a forever promise. The bow that God put in the sky is a forever promise of God's love for all living things. As you end the session, invite the children to share the forever promises they remember that God has made.

God of faithful promises, I praise you for your steadfast love and grace. In Christ's name. Amen.

Supplies

Music & Melodies
(MM) 2023–2024

Stories, Colors & More
(SCM) i–iv, 2, 2a, 14

basic supplies
(see p. vii)

story audio (see p. vii)

candle

green cloth

ark mural from
September 3

tissue paper in several
colors

6–10" lengths of string

ribbons in the colors of
the rainbow

Responding

Claiming

small paper cups, water,
food coloring, cotton
swabs

Offering

colored sidewalk chalk

Extra

SCM 2b, 2c; copies of
Grace Notes (GN) 1 and
GN 2; coin

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.

Tie a string in a bow around your finger for the session.

“Claiming God’s Grace,” “Offering God’s Grace,” and “Extra Activity” require more prep.

Welcoming and Preparing

LG A TD 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.”

Explain that today’s session ends the story of Noah and the ark.

Invite children to set up a worship space with a green cloth, a candle, and a Bible. Ask a few older children to hang the ark mural from last session on a wall. Invite others to draw the outline of a rainbow on a large sheet of paper. Suggest that they tear tissue paper into pieces approximately 1" square. Have them glue the pieces of paper on the rainbow, keeping the same colors together in each section. When they have completed the rainbow, hang it over or beside the ark mural.

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. Today’s Scripture passage is lengthy. Decide if you will have volunteers read it or use **SCM 2**. Ask for several volunteers to practice the reading.

Wonder aloud why you have a string around your finger. After the children offer ideas, explain that sometimes people tie strings on a finger to remember a promise made to someone. For example, “This string helps me remember I promised my daughter that I would buy her favorite snack.”

Tie a string around the finger or wrist of each child, though not too tight. As you do, ask each to promise to do something kind and caring for someone during that day. Explain that once they have fulfilled the promise, they can take off the string.

TD *Some children who have tactile sensitivities are bothered by items that most people don’t notice or care about. Tags in clothing, sand or grass on feet, even the feeling of a scratchy or felted blanket can cause a reaction that may be interpreted as bad behavior. If a child resists having a string on their finger or wrist, allow them to put it in a pocket or tie it on a belt loop.*



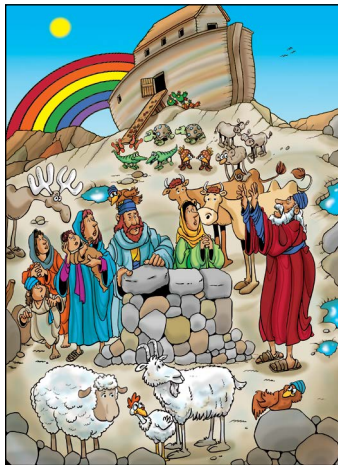
Singing

Play “Rise and Shine”—**MM 1**; **SCM 14**—inviting the children to sing along. Suggest the children use the motions they created in the previous session or make new ones.

Praying

Turn on the candle. Invite the group to sit near the ark mural to hear the story. Lead the children in the echo prayer:

Thank you, God, for the rainbow. /
It is your promise to us. /
When we see a rainbow /
may we remember /
your love and care for us and your world. /
Amen. /



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.

This is a good opportunity for older children to help younger children.

Preparing to Hear the Story

C

Show **SCM 2a**. Ask the children to share what they know about rainbows. Tell them, in today's story, the rainbow symbolizes a promise. Wonder together what it means to make a promise and what promises the children have made in their lives.

Explain that, in today's Bible story, God makes a promise to Noah. This promise was not just for Noah, but for all people. God made the promise to us too! Explain that another name for God's promise is a *covenant*. Suggest that the children listen for the mention of the rainbow and the promise/covenant when you read the story.

Hearing the Story

L

Invite a child to find Genesis 9 in the Bible. Ask for several volunteers to read **SCM 2**. 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. Tell the children that, whenever they hear the word *rainbow*, they should make a large arc with their arms, putting both hands together over their head. When they hear the word *promise*, they should find a partner and connect pinkie fingers together.

Reflecting on God's Grace

Ask the children to tell you the story in their own words. Prompt them by asking them what happened first, and so on. After they have told you the story, ask them what God promised Noah. Wonder together if this promise was for Noah or for all people. Wonder together why God chose the rainbow as the sign of God's promise.



Singing

M MS

Distribute ribbons in the colors of the rainbow, one to each child. Play, sing, and dance to “Rise and Shine”—**MM 1; SCM 14**. Encourage the children to dance freely, waving their ribbons. Challenge the children to line up in rainbow order and, together, move through the space as you play the song again. Turn off the candle.

RESPONDING IN GRATITUDE

Select activities appropriate for your group and the time available.



Claiming God’s Grace

A C L T LD

Have the children cover the workspace with plastic or newsprint, and put on old shirts or smocks. Have each child fold a coffee filter in half. Pour a small amount of food coloring into a paper cup. Dilute the food coloring with 2 or 3 teaspoons of water. Show the children how to dip a cotton swab in the diluted food coloring and paint a rainbow around the top of the folded coffee filter.

Explain that they need to leave a medium-sized blank area in the middle of the rainbow.

Write on newsprint: *I have set my bow in the clouds (Genesis 9:13)*. Have the children copy the Bible verse in the blank area underneath their rainbows.

As the children are working, invite them to tell about a time when they have seen a rainbow. Pose questions such as:

- What did you think of when you saw the rainbow?
- How did it make you feel?
- After hearing this Bible story, what will you think about the next time you see a rainbow?

T *Transition times can be more frustrating to children if they have to wait. If children will need to wait because of cleanup, provide a simple task such as rhythmic hand clapping to occupy the time and lessen the frustration.*

Praying God’s Grace

M L

Show **SCM 2** and read the following from the story again:

“Never again will I flood the whole world,” God promised. “From this day on, there will always be time for planting and picking the food that grows. The day will always follow night. The cold days of winter will always be followed by the warm days of summer. For as long as the earth shall be, I make this promise to you and your children’s children. I make this promise to every living being that breathes.”





Then God said to Noah and his family, “Look up to the sky.” Noah and his family looked up. There in the sky was a beautiful rainbow.

Provide paper and crayons or markers. Tell the children that, by praying the colors of the rainbow, we can remember God’s promises. Ask the children to draw a rainbow or simply doodle in the color mentioned as they silently pray through the colors as you guide them with the following:

- ▼ **Red:** Say a prayer to God, saying that you are sorry for something wrong that you have done.
- ▼ **Orange:** Pray a prayer of thanks to God for everything God has given you: family, friends, church, food, clothes, shelter, and more.
- ▼ **Yellow:** Say a prayer of praise for the blessings we have.
- ▼ **Green:** Pray and ask God to show you how you can be more giving to others.
- ▼ **Blue:** Give God praise for creation: for the sky, the land, the animals, and all that surrounds us.
- ▼ **Purple:** Pray for those who may not have food or family to spend time with. Pray that God would comfort them and provide them with food and people to show them love.



Offering God’s Grace



Make an offering of rainbows to remind your congregation of God’s promise. If possible, go outside and make rainbows using colored sidewalk chalk on sidewalks or empty parking areas. Have children write, “Remember God’s promise!” by the rainbows. If you cannot go outside, have the children use craft supplies to make rainbow pictures to display around your church.



Extra Activity



*Before the session, assemble the game board by taping **SCM 2b** and **SCM 2c** together. Make a couple of copies of **GN 1** and cut out the game pieces along the solid lines. Cut the game cards from **GN 2** and glue them to construction paper.*

Play a game to remember Noah and the rainbow. Allow the children to select and color a game piece. When they have colored the animals, show them how to fold along both dotted lines to make their game pieces stand up.

The children will take turns flipping a coin and moving their game piece forward one space for heads and two spaces for tails. If a child lands on a rainbow space, they select a card and read it aloud. Have an older child help those who have difficulty reading. The game ends when all have made it to the finish.



LOVING AND SERVING GOD



Give each child an opportunity to tell what they have learned about the story of Noah.

Remind the children that God placed the rainbow in the sky as a reminder of God's promises. Lead the children in prayer, inviting them to point to or touch the color mentioned as you name it:



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).

Dear God, thank you for the rainbow to remind us of your promise to us.

When we see red, may we remember to tell you and others we are sorry for things we have done wrong.

When we see orange, may we give thanks.

When we see yellow, may we praise you for all our blessings.

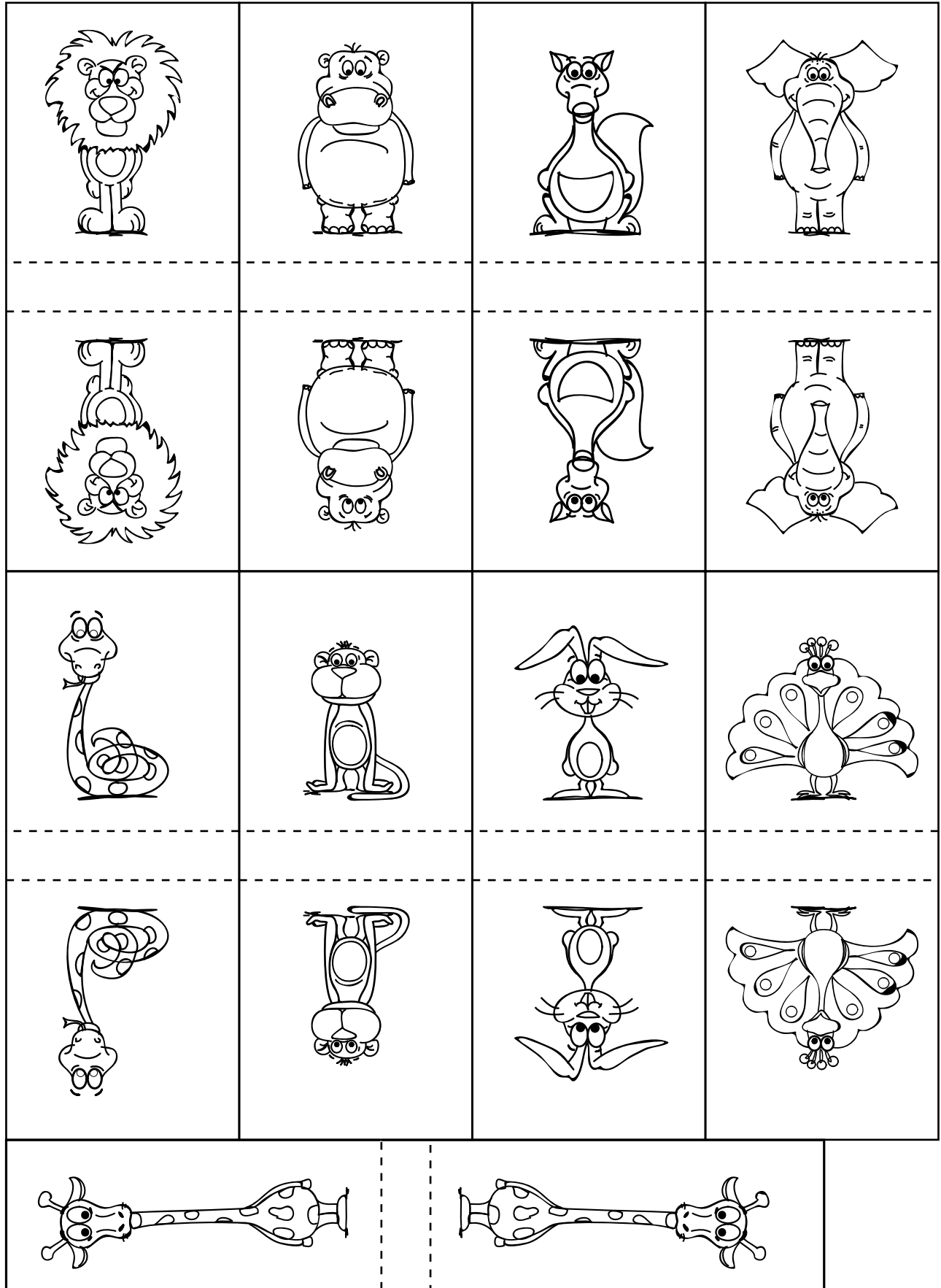
When we see green, may we be kind to others.

When we see blue, may we care for our world.

When we see purple, may we remember those in need.

We pray all these things, knowing that you love us so very much. Amen.

Bless each child as they leave, saying, “(Name), go in God’s grace and care.”



You recycled your plastic water bottle.

Move ahead 1 space.

You watered the plants.

Move ahead 1 space.

You helped feed the dog.

Move ahead 1 space.

You helped plant a tree.

Move ahead 3 spaces.

You turned out the lights when you left the room.

Move ahead 1 space.

You picked up trash.

Move ahead 2 spaces.

You helped plant a vegetable garden.

Move ahead 2 spaces.

You turned off the water while brushing your teeth.

Move ahead 1 space.

You helped collect coats for kids who don't have one.

Move ahead 2 spaces.

You participated in a hunger walk.

Move ahead 1 space.

You took your pet to the vet.

Move ahead 1 space.

You gave canned foods to the food bank.

Move ahead 1 space.

