

NOAH AND THE FLOOD

Gen 6:9-22, 9:8-17

Preparing to Hear the Word:

- The story of Noah and the Ark is a Creation story – order is restored out of chaos.
- Forty days represents a very long time in the Bible.
- A covenant is a lasting, even permanent, agreement.
- The Rainbow is the sign of the covenant.
- A cubit is about 45 cm, the length of a man's hand from the tip of his fingers to his elbow, when his arm is bent.

You will need:

- Blue underlay
- Noah and his wife, an ark, 4-5 pairs of animals and a dove.
- A rainbow.

When children are seated in a semi-circle ready to listen to the story, place the gold box/bag, containing the materials you will need, carefully beside you.

Place the underlay in the middle of the space.

Place Noah, facing the children, in the middle of the underlay but in the lower half away from you. Leave space in the centre for the ark.

There was once a man named Noah.

He was a good man. God was pleased with Noah.

Place Noah's wife next to Noah.

Noah and his wife had three sons. One day God said to Noah, "There will be a flood over the earth.

I want you to build an ark. Make it strong and put a roof over the top."

Place the ark in the centre of the underlay.

Noah and his family built the ark. It was hard work.

Lay the pairs of animals at the edges of the underlay

God said to Noah, "Gather two of every kind of animal: mammals, reptiles, birds and all animals that crawl on the earth.

God told Noah to put the animals in the ark so that they would be safe. God said, "Gather enough food for you and your family and all the animals because the flood will last a long time."

Use your fingers to show the rain falling down.

Seven days later it began to rain.

Move Noah, Noah's wife and the rest of the animals into the ark.

God told Noah to go into the ark. Noah and his family and all the animals boarded the ark.

Raise the ark a little and hold above the ground as you say:

It rained for forty days and nights.

Raise the ark higher, rock the ark, as you say:

The water rose higher and higher over the earth. The ark was tossed and turned on the water.

Lower the ark slowly as you say:

God looked after Noah, his family and all the creatures in the ark.

Slowly place the ark back onto the underlay.

Finally the rain stopped. The ark floated calmly on the water. Gradually the water fell. Noah looked out of the ark but could not see land.

Hold up the dove and then fly the dove back to the ark.

He released a dove to find out if there was dry land.

The dove came back exhausted. There had been no dry place for it to rest!

Fly the dove away from the ark.

Seven days later Noah sent the dove out again.

Then fly it back with the small piece of greenery

This time it came back with a small olive branch. Noah was very excited.

Fly the dove around away from the ark.

He waited another seven days and then released the dove again.

Place it on the edge of the space.

This time it did not come back. There was dry land!

Bring Noah, his wife and the animals out of the ark; place them together on the underlay in front of the ark – Noah and his wife in the centre.

God called to Noah, “Come out of the ark. Let the animals go free to live on the earth.” Noah, his family and all the animals left the ark. Noah built an altar and gave thanks to God.

Place the rainbow coloured material around the figures in an arc or make arc movement with your hand.

God then put a beautiful rainbow across the sky.

God said to Noah, “Look at the bow in the sky. It is a sign of a covenant I make with you and all living creatures. I will protect and care for all of creation. The earth will not be destroyed again. I am with you.”

Leave Noah and wife in centre. Move the animals out of the ark in different directions.

Noah and his family lived on the earth for many, many more years.

The Word of the Lord

Response: Thanks be to God

I Wonder:

- I wonder what Noah thought when God asked him to build the Ark?
- I wonder what message God is telling us in this story?
- I wonder why God loves us so much, even when we do the wrong thing?

Noah and the Ark

Gen 6:9-22, 9:8-17

This is the account of Noah.

Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God. Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth.

Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight and was full of violence. God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways. So God said to Noah, "I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth. So make yourself an ark of cypress wood; make rooms in it and coat it with pitch inside and out. This is how you are to build it: The ark is to be 450 feet long, 75 feet wide and 45 feet high. Make a roof for it and finish the ark to within 18 inches of the top. Put a door in the side of the ark and make lower, middle and upper decks. I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens, every creature that has the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish. But I will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark—you and your sons and your wife and your sons' wives with you. You are to bring into the ark two of all living creatures, male and female, to keep them alive with you. Two of every kind of bird, of every kind of animal and of every kind of creature that moves along the ground will come to you to be kept alive. You are to take every kind of food that is to be eaten and store it away as food for you and for them."

Noah did everything just as God commanded him.

Chapter 9:

Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him: "I now establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you and with every living creature that was with you—the birds, the livestock and all the wild animals, all those that came out of the ark with you—every living creature on earth. I establish my covenant with you: Never again will all life be cut off by the waters of a flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth."

And God said, "This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to come: I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth.

Whenever I bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will remember my covenant between me and you and all living creatures of every kind. Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life. Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth."

So God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant I have established between me and all life on the earth."

Prepare to Hear the Word: Teacher

The story of Noah and the great flood follows the pattern of other flood stories in the ancient literature of Israel's neighbours. The story is told in Genesis 6-9. It uses simple language a much repetition, suggesting this story may have come from a long history of oral storytelling. The story reprises some of the elements of the seven day account of creation in Genesis 1. Again, God is hovering above the waters (Gen 8:1) perhaps to suggest that the flood offers a renewal of the original creation, a chance to start again with the righteous humans and the blameless animals. Everything has been washed clean by the waters of creation.

A covenant or agreement, is made between God and Noah and his descendants. The sign of the covenant is a rainbow. The image of God given in this narrative is ambiguous. On the one hand God is presented as angry and vengeful, unhappy with the corruption that has entered God's good creation; on the other hand, God is shown as compassionate and forgiving.

Maurice Ryan 2003, Expressions Book 6

