



SESSION 2

Noah



MEETING AIM

To encounter a loving and just God.



BIBLE PASSAGE

Genesis 6:5-9:17



BACKGROUND

We sometimes approach the story of Noah from the point of view of a children's Bible. We think about the pairs of animals going in two by two, of Noah and his family safe in the ark and of the rainbow God sends as a promise to Noah. However, there are parts of this story which surprise and horrify. Exploring this story with younger children may not bring up questions about the darker parts of this story, but be ready to talk about questions the children may come up with, such as where all the other people and animals went, or what the ark was like to live in.

+ CIRCLE TIME



As the children arrive, sit everyone down in a circle. If you have parents, encourage them to sit with their children (but not to speak for them). Ask the children if they have done anything this week and encourage them to tell the group about it. Younger children may struggle to remember much, but listen to anything they would like to tell you. Share something that you have done this week too. Thank everyone for their stories and say a simple prayer thanking God for what you have discussed.

+ WATER PLAY



You will need: water play equipment; cover-up and clean-up facilities (try to have a boat bath toy as part of the play equipment)

Enjoy playing with water together (do this outside or cover up the floors so that nothing gets damaged). As part of your play, put the boat bath toy in a bowl of water and see if you can sink it by pouring water on it from a watering can. As you play, chat about what the children like about the water. Ask them to imagine they are in the boat bath toy: would they feel safe with the rain falling down onto the boat? Point out how the boat stays afloat. Ask if the children have ever been on a boat themselves.

+ BIBLE STORY



You will need: chairs or boxes

Before you start, make sure that all your props are close to hand. Sit the children down and start telling this story:

A long time ago, there was a man called Noah. He was a friend of God. He loved God and wanted to please him. Noah made God very happy. But no one else in the world was like Noah. Everyone else was bad, and made God unhappy. They liked to hurt each other. They were greedy. They didn't love God. God was very sorry that he had ever made humans.

God decided that he would start again with Noah and his family. He would make it rain for a long time. The whole world would be covered with water, like a giant ocean. But he told Noah to build a big boat, called an ark. This would keep Noah and his family safe. God also told Noah to gather up two of each kind of animal and put them into the big boat. So, that's what he did.

Show the children how to gather together the boxes or chairs (or whatever else you're using) and arrange them into a boat shape. Then encourage everyone to be an animal or bird and to move around the room like that animal. Then ask one child to be Noah and to lead all the 'animals' into the boat. Ask the children if it is crowded or spacious in the boat. Would all the animals get on with each other?

Once Noah, his family and all the animals were inside, God closed the door. And it started to rain. And it rained. And it rained. For 40 days, it rained. Even when it stopped, Noah and his boat bobbed about on the waves for months! Finally, the waters went down and the boat settled on solid ground. Noah opened the door and his family and all the animals came out. *Open part of your boat and let everyone out. Encourage them to run around, still pretending to be their animals.*

Noah and his family said: "Thank you" to God. And God made Noah a promise. He put a big rainbow in the sky and said: "I promise that I will never send a big flood ever again. I will keep you and your family safe." *Encourage everyone to cheer and to shout: "Thank you, God!" If the children would like to, enjoy pretending to be Noah and the animals for a few minutes more.*

+ CHATTING TOGETHER



Ask the children these questions, making sure everyone has the chance to contribute:

- What's your favourite part of this story?
- What didn't you like about the story?
- Why did God keep Noah and his family safe?
- Do you want to say anything to God?

+ RAINBOW RESPONSE



You will need: a large sheet of paper with a rainbow drawn on; paper of all the colours of the rainbow (red, orange, yellow, green, light blue, dark blue, purple); glue sticks

Before the session, cut the coloured paper into squares small enough to fit in the strips of your rainbow, but large enough to draw or write on. Show the children your rainbow and remind them about the promise that God made: that he would keep his people safe. Ask the children to think about what God is like. How would they describe God? They might come up with words such as 'big', 'my friend' or 'kind'. Help them to write these words on the red paper. Do the same for these other colours:

- Yellow: write or draw your favourite animal.
- Light blue: people you want to thank God for, who keep you safe.
- Purple: people who might need looking after.

Work together to decorate the rainbow, sticking the paper squares you have written on, as well as paper squares of the other colours of the rainbow, onto the paper.

+ PRAYER



You will need: My big prayer book (Scripture Union)

Use the prayers from pages 27 and 62 of *My big prayer book* to help the children reflect on God being with them and helping them, as he was with and helped Noah. If the children would like to pray about anything specific, help them to do so.

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