



SESSION 2

Noah



MEETING AIM

To encounter a loving and just God.



BIBLE PASSAGE

Genesis 6:5-9:17



BACKGROUND

Whether you have young people in your group who have grown up in a church, or who have come recently to your community, there is likely to be some awareness of the story of Noah. Any understanding may well be limited to two-by-two and a happy Noah on the deck of a lovely boat, but the story is much darker than that. As you encounter the whole story in this session, help the young people wrestle with what it shows us about God's love and justice.

GATHERING TIME



You will need: refreshments; a comfortable place to sit and chat

As the young people arrive, serve them the refreshments you have provided. Try to have something a bit more interesting than biscuits and squash - is there someone in your congregation who could make cake? Do you have the facilities to make toast and tea? As you eat and drink together, chat about the young people's lives - do they have anything to share? Any triumphs? Any disasters?! Share stories from your life too, if appropriate.

WHAT'S THE WORST...?



Start the session by asking the group: "What's the worst thing you have ever seen / heard / smelt...?" You could ask about a song, smell, excuse or embarrassing moment.

BIBLE EXPLORATION (PART ONE)



You will need: sheets, blankets and anything that can be used to make a 'den'; torches

Gather the young people together and say that you're going to explore a passage from the very beginning of the Bible:

Thousands of years ago, there lived a man called Noah. Noah and his family loved God, but they were the only people who did. The rest of humanity lied, stole, murdered, abused and tortured. In fact, they did whatever they wanted. God looked at his

creation and was heartbroken. The people he had made to be in relationship with him had turned their back on him. Only Noah remained his friend. Sadly, God decided to start again.

"Noah," God said, "I am going to bring a great flood to destroy the world. Build a boat and fill it with every kind of animal. When the floods come, you and your family should get into the boat, so that you'll be safe."

Noah and his family built the boat, filled it with animals and made sure there was enough food for themselves and the animals. Soon after, the skies opened and water burst out from the earth. The flood had come, and Noah's family boarded their boat - the boat that would be their home for more than a year.

Show the group the den-building resources that you have brought. Challenge them to build the inside of the boat, big enough for everyone to fit inside. When you have finished, make sure it's safe before inviting everyone to go inside. Sit inside the 'ark', turn on your torches and do the Chatting together questions.

CHATTING TOGETHER (PART ONE)



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

- How do you think Noah and his family felt inside the boat?
• What do you think about what God has done?
• What does the story so far tell us about God? What is he like?

BIBLE EXPLORATION (PART TWO)



You will need: small boxes

Still sitting in your ark, tell the second part of the story:

It rained for 40 days without stopping. The constant drumming of the rain on the roof was infuriating. The boat pitched and rolled in the wind, the animals cried and shrieked and growled and moaned. The boat was full of noise and terrible smells. Noah and his family were pushed to their limits.

The rain stopped, but for 150 days the boat drifted on the water. Nothing was left, just the boat. But God had not forgotten about Noah. The waters slowly started going down, but it took another 150 days before the boat came to rest on a mountain.

Finally, the land dried out enough for them to leave the boat. Noah opened the doors and the animals and birds streamed out. Noah and his family staggered blinking into the day light, free at last from the noise and the smell. (Open up and leave your boat.)

The world outside looked brand new. But here and there, there were the remains of settlements, destroyed by the flood. Noah took some stones and built an altar to thank

God for keeping them safe. (Build an altar with the boxes and anything else you have.)

God placed a rainbow in the sky and said: "I'm giving you my blessing. Go and have large families, so my people will live all over the earth. And I'm giving you the rainbow as a sign. I promise that the world will not be destroyed by flood again."

CHATTING TOGETHER (PART TWO)



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

- How do you think Noah and his family felt when they left the boat?
• What do you think about what God has done?
• Having heard the story, how would you describe God?

CREATIVE RESPONSE



You will need: art materials; pens; paper

Show the group the art materials and ask them to use whatever they want to make a response to the story and the discussion you have had. The young people may have questions about God's love and sense of justice. Be ready to chat with anyone who wants to.

At the end of the response time, if anyone wants to share what they have done and why, then allow some time for this. It doesn't matter if the young people have produced anything at the end of the time or not, the process is more important than the end product. This time of doing will help young people think, ask questions and start to create theology.

PRAYER



Finish with a time of quiet, giving the group some space to talk to God and ask him the questions they need to ask. If you can, play some reflective music as the group 'does business' with God.

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