

**Gen. 9:8–17**

**Ps. 25:1–10**

**1 Pet. 3:18–22**

**Mark 1:9–15**

# God's Promise

**Goal for  
the Session**

*Children will learn about God's promise of everlasting love to Noah and all creation.*

## ■ PREPARING FOR THE SESSION

### Focus on Genesis 9:8–17

#### **WHAT is important to know?**

— From “Exegetical Perspective,” Dianne Bergant

Several important aspects of this covenant should be noted. First, it was made with all of creation. Second, it was multigenerational, made not only with Noah and those present, but with all who would come in the future as well. The biblical flood narrative contains a story of deliverance and of relationship with God. God directed Noah, the only one who found favor with the Lord, to build an ark so that he and his family and some of the animals might escape the punishing waters of the flood. From this small community God then fashioned a new human family and established a covenant with that family and with the world as a whole. This is a story of deliverance and new beginnings.

#### **WHERE is God in these words?**

— From “Theological Perspective,” Wm. Loyd Allen

The God revealed here is adaptable, touched to the heart by creation, and willing to accept hurt to keep hope alive. The God of this covenant is unchanging only in refusing to give up on creation. God keeps the future open by self-limitation when humanity threatens to close off hope by unlimited repeat offenses. God takes this risk because God's heart is touched by creation's suffering. The God declaring this covenant is not an objective judge meting out a just sentence, but a lover grieved to the heart at the beloved's violence, yet still seeking reconciliation. Readers will find divine regret throughout this covenant, but will look in vain for anger.

#### **SO WHAT does this mean for our lives?**

— From “Pastoral Perspective,” Jane Anne Ferguson

The creatures made in God's image may always resist God. Yet God lays down God's weapons against creation, against humankind. God puts the undrawn bow in the clouds as a personal reminder “never again” to destroy creation with a flood. In the light of that bow, the rainbow, humanity can see God as “One Who Remembers,” even in the midst of chaos, even in the midst of rebellion by creation and its creatures.

#### **NOW WHAT is God's word calling us to do?**

— From “Homiletical Perspective,” David J. Lose

The self-limitation and willingness to sacrifice divine freedom that this passage describes reach their climax in the passion of Jesus Christ, for which Lent prepares us. This passage invites us to reconsider our relationships with each other and, indeed, all creation. If God, who alone has the right to despair, judge, or destroy, surrenders the divine prerogative from covenantal commitment, might not we who have tasted this mercy look upon all persons and all things as inherently worthwhile, that is, as those things that God has called worthy?

**FOCUS SCRIPTURE**

**Genesis 9:8–17**

## Focus on Your Teaching

When they are scared, children seek calm in the arms of loving family members, where familiar routines and gestures comfort. Today, children will learn of the hope and love in God's sign of the rainbow. God's people can trust this promise. Some children in your group may know the story of Noah. While it is helpful to review the entire account briefly, strive to keep the focus on the ending—after the waters recede, God dispels the fear of the flood with a sign of God's enduring love and hope.

*O God, your sign reminds me to be one who remembers your love and faithfulness. May I be a reminder of your love to those around me. Amen.*

### YOU WILL NEED

- plastic Easter eggs
- Easter basket
- purple decorator stones
- permanent marker
- children's illustrated story Bible
- Singing the Feast*, [bit.ly/SingingTheFeast](http://bit.ly/SingingTheFeast)
- Resource Sheet 1
- Color Pack 1, 2, 31, 35
- streamers in rainbow colors
- scissors
- masking tape
- tray, 2 clear jars
- eyedropper
- food coloring

### For Responding

- option 1: Color Pack 2, copies of Resource Sheet 2, crayons; optional: prism, flashlight
- option 2: white felt, narrow ribbon in rainbow colors, fabric glue
- option 3: Color Pack 35; *Singing the Feast*, [bit.ly/SingingTheFeast](http://bit.ly/SingingTheFeast)

## LEADING THE SESSION

### GATHERING

*Before the children arrive*, place purple decorator stones (from a craft store or florist) in an Easter basket, six per child plus some extras. Using permanent marker, print each child's name on a plastic Easter egg that opens. If you are using option 2 in Responding, cut two cloud shapes from white felt (about 1" x 2") for each learner.

Welcome the children, taking a moment to visit with each one.

Gather the group. Hold up a handful of purple stones, explaining that the church has entered a new season in the church year. It is called Lent, and the color of Lent is purple. Lent is the time for Christians to prepare for Easter. There will be six Sundays and then it will be Easter. Listen to "Amazing Grace" (Color Pack 31, *Singing the Feast*). Some children may be able to sing or hum along.

Playing "Amazing Grace" as background music, explain the Lenten ritual. Each week children will add a purple decorator stone to their eggs. Each stone symbolizes something children want to ask God or something they wonder about. Keep the eggs in the Easter basket until the next session.

Pray:

*Dearest God, bless our Lenten journey. Bless our learning, our words, and our work today. Amen.*

### EXPLORING

Invite children to tell you about promises that people have made to them:

- ✿ What is a promise?
- ✿ When is it simple to keep a promise? When is it difficult?

### Amazing Grace

Amazing grace, how sweet  
the sound,  
That saved someone like  
me.  
I once was lost but now am  
found,  
Was blind, but now I see.

Through many dangers,  
toils, and snares  
I have already come;  
'Tis grace that brought me  
safe thus far,  
and grace will lead me  
home.

When we've been here ten  
thousand years  
Bright shining as the sun,  
We've no less days to sing  
God's praise  
Than when we'd first  
begun.

Children who have seen news reports of or who have experienced a flood, hurricane, or tsunami may be troubled by this Scripture. Listen to their comments with respect and love. Assure them that when we pray, God will listen, and we can tell God about our fears. Ask your pastor to come and speak with the group if such experiences are fresh in their minds.

EASY  
PREP

Tell the group that the Bible story today tells about an important promise. Read the story of Noah and the flood (Genesis 6:9–8:19) from a children's illustrated story Bible or storybook. Stop the story when Noah's family and the animals come out of the ark. Ask children if they know what happens next. After listening to their responses, invite them to listen to how the Bible tells the end of the story.

Ask a child to hold Color Pack 1 while you read the ending to the story from Resource Sheet 1 (Genesis 9:9–17: God's Promise). Discuss the story by asking:

- ✧ What did God promise Noah and his family?
- ✧ What did God promise to all creation?
- ✧ Why does God put a rainbow in the sky after a storm?
- ✧ The story says this is God's "solemn promise." What is a solemn promise?
- ✧ What can you remember about God when you see a rainbow in the sky?

Look at Color Pack 2. Together, wonder about all the places in the world where rainbows appear. Confirm that God's promise is the same, no matter where in the world we are. God made this promise to the entire earth and all its peoples.

Now it's time to move! Bring out streamers in rainbow colors, scissors, and masking tape. As a group, make a room rainbow by stretching streamers across the width of your meeting space and attaching the streamers on each wall. Have children work together in twisting the streamers, getting the tape ready, and working with an adult to attach the streamers above everyone's heads. (If this is not possible in your space, make a rainbow across the top of a table.)

Sum up Exploring with this movement prayer. Ask children to stand up and make a rainbow movement with their arms. After practicing a few times, ask children to quiet their arms. Say that during the prayer, they will make rainbow arms every time they hear the word *rainbow*:

*Dear God,  
After the rain, your **rainbow** promise shows through the clouds.  
Your **rainbow** reminds us  
Of your love for us and all the earth.  
Thank you for your love,  
Thank you for **rainbows**.  
Amen.*

## RESPONDING

Mark the activities you will use:

1. **Rainbow Colors** Rainbows are memorable signs of God's promise, and children are fascinated by them. Look at Color Pack 2 and invite children to tell about rainbows they have seen. Option: Shine a flashlight through a prism to cast a rainbow on a wall or the ceiling. Talk about how all rainbows have one thing in common: the colors are always the same and they are always in the same order. Distribute copies of Resource Sheet 2

Roy G. Biv is a mnemonic for remembering the order of the colors of a rainbow—red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet, beginning from the outside of the rainbow.

(God's Rainbow Promise) and crayons to color rainbows to take home. Point out that *indigo* is a combination of blue and violet. Invite children to use their own words to write God's promise under their rainbows. Help with spelling as needed.

2. **Rainbow Bible Bookmarks** Create a reminder of God's promise that children can use at home. Give each learner two cloud shapes cut from white felt (about 1" x 2"). Have learners glue 10" pieces of red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple ribbons to dangle from the bottom of one cloud shape; then glue the second cloud shape on top, "sandwiching" the ribbon. Review what you have learned about God's promise to Noah and all creation. What is good news about this promise for God's people today? Encourage learners to use their bookmarks in a Bible or Bible storybook at home to remind them of this good news of God's promise.

3. **Rainbow Music** God's promise of everlasting love can be expressed through song. Play "The Whole World Is in God's Hands" (Color Pack 35, [Singing the Feast](#)) and sing it with the children. When you are comfortable with the tune, add a new verse about God's rainbow:

The rainbow is God's promise, yes it is.  
 The rainbow is God's promise, yes it is.  
 The rainbow is God's promise, yes it is,  
 A promise of God's love for us.

Check with worship leaders to see if this song might be used as a sending song in your church's worship service today.

### The Whole World Is in God's Hands

The whole world is in God's hands,  
 The whole wide world is in God's hands,  
 The whole world is in God's hands,  
 The world is in God's hands.

The wind and the wave are in God's hands . . .

The fish and the bird are in God's hands . . .

All of the animals are in God's hands . . .

All the world's people are in God's hands . . .

You and me are in God's hands . . .

### CLOSING

Gather the group. Bring out a tray with a jar of purple water, an eyedropper, and an empty jar. Have children take turns telling something they will remember about today's Bible story, dropping some purple water from the eyedropper into the empty jar as they do so. When everyone has had a turn, say: "We have collected a lot of memories and knowledge about God today."

Sing "The Whole World Is in God's Hands" (Color Pack 35, [Singing the Feast](#)). Invite children to join you in this prayer, echoing your words and actions:

*God of promises,*  
*Your love is a promise for me.* (Cross hands over heart. Point to self.)  
*Your love is a promise for all.* (Cross hands over heart. Point to others.)  
*Amen.* (Raise arms in praise.)

Say good-bye to each child by name.

**God's Promise**  
**(Genesis 9:9–17, CEV)**

God said to Noah and his family:

<sup>9</sup>I am going to make a solemn promise to you and to everyone who will live after you. <sup>10</sup>This includes the birds and the animals that came out of the boat. <sup>11</sup>I promise every living creature that the earth and those living on it will never again be destroyed by a flood.

<sup>12-13</sup>The rainbow that I have put in the sky will be my sign to you and to every living creature on earth. It will remind you that I will keep this promise forever. <sup>14</sup>When I send clouds over the earth, and a rainbow appears in the sky, <sup>15</sup>I will remember my promise to you and to all other living creatures. Never again will I let floodwaters destroy all life. <sup>16</sup>When I see the rainbow in the sky, I will always remember the promise that I have made to every living creature. <sup>17</sup>The rainbow will be the sign of that solemn promise.



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# God's Rainbow Promise

